

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility

Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

NPS Contract Number: 1443-CX-2000-99-003
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1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

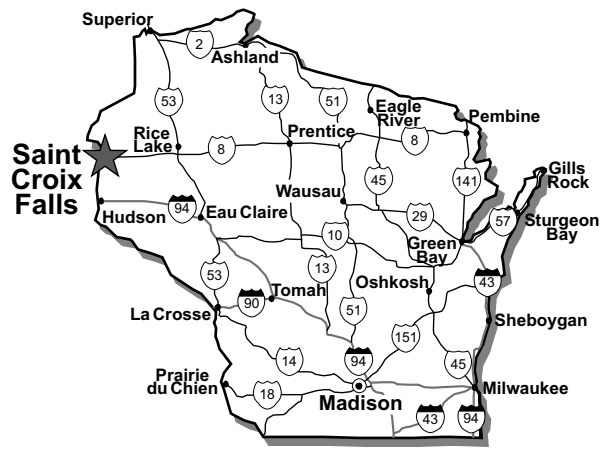
The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to site, design, and construct a new Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility for St. Croix National Scenic Riverway in the vicinity of St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin. St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a unit of the National Park System established under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542, October 2, 1968). The primary purpose of the proposed facility would be to provide NPS staff with new and efficient office, laboratory, exhibits/curatorial, and visitor education facilities capable of meeting the current and future mission requirements. The proposed facility would reflect the principles of sustainability consistent with NPS facilities and operations.

The current NPS Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility, located just north of downtown St. Croix Falls, WI, is a converted restaurant/motel originally constructed in 1967 (Figure 1). The NPS has identified the need for a new facility which would remedy the following deficiencies: inadequate office, laboratory and storage space; asbestos; groundwater seepage and foundation settling; rainwater leakage and moisture problems; elevated mold levels; a dangerously inadequate electrical system; overstressed framing; accessibility issues for physically challenged individuals; and violations of current setback standards for the Riverway.

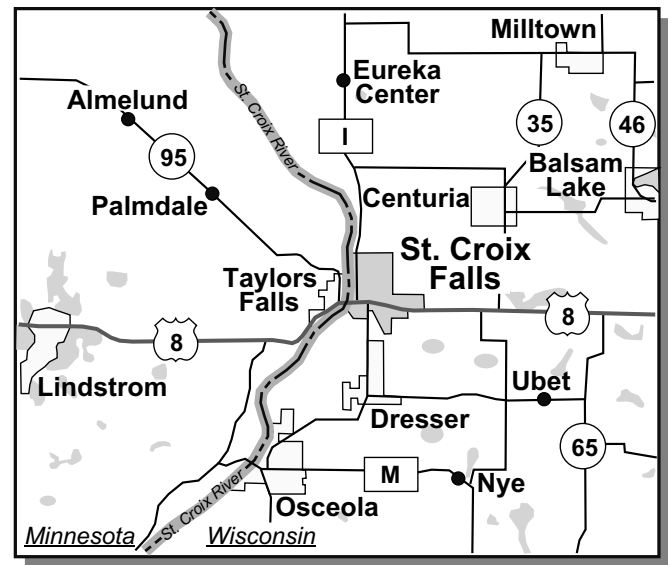
This environmental assessment (EA) includes the following specific purposes for the proposed actions described for the headquarters/visitor contact facility. In addition to eliminating the deficiencies identified in the existing facility, the new facility would also provide:

- Adequate curatorial space for exhibits collections.
- Room for possible future expansion.
- State-of-the-art design for energy efficiency.
- An example of sustainable design and construction.
- Support for overall community planning and development goals.
- Easy access to state and federal highways.
- Adequate automobile parking and provide limited RV and bus parking.
- A strong visual and pedestrian connection to the St. Croix River.
- Interpretation opportunities by developing outdoor classroom space.
- Easy connectivity to utilities.

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Wisconsin



Minnesota Wisconsin

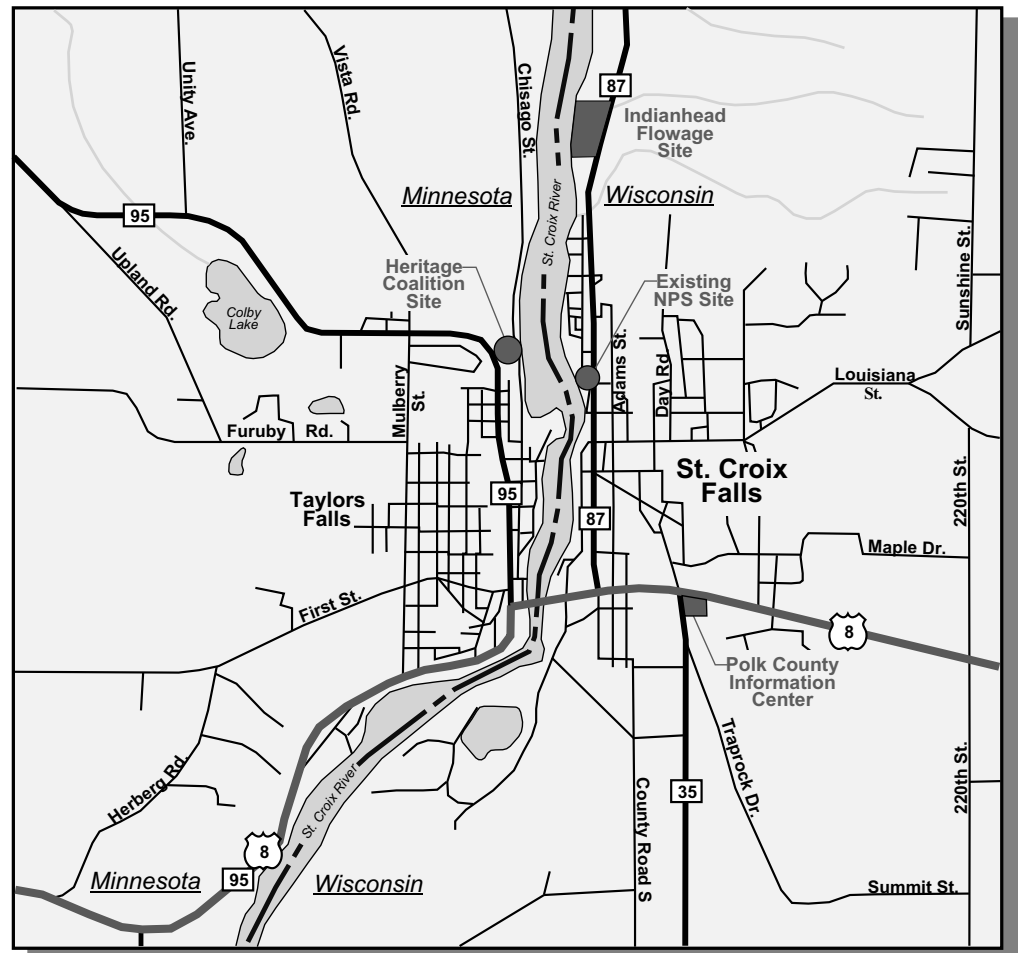


Figure 1

Location, Vicinity and Possible Sites for New National Park Service Facilities

**St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Facility**

St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin



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2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Project Background and Scope

Congress designated portions of the St. Croix River and its major tributary, the Namekagon, as one of the first wild and scenic rivers when it enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-542). The Lower St. Croix River, below the hydroelectric dam at Taylors Falls, MN/St. Croix Falls, WI, was subsequently designated as a scenic river in 1972 (Public Law 92-560, 93-621, and 96-580). The Riverway is administered and managed as a single unit. The NPS administers the upper 227 miles of Riverway, referred to as the “federal zone,” while the remaining 25 miles are jointly administered by the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin. The latter section is referred to as the “state zone”, and the states have jurisdictional authority. The resources of the Riverway have been administered jointly by NPS and the states since the inception of the Riverway.

The St. Croix River, with a watershed of 7,760 square miles, flows through a diverse and largely natural landscape. The boundary of the Upper Riverway beginning above the hydroelectric dam at Taylor Falls, MN/St. Croix Falls, WI, includes the northern portion of the St. Croix River and the entire length of the Namekagon for a total of about 200 river miles. The St. Croix flows 154 miles from its headwaters near Solon Springs, Wisconsin to Prescott, Wisconsin, where it joins the Mississippi River. The Namekagon River runs for about 98 miles from Lake Namekagon to its confluence with the St. Croix.

The relatively free-flowing river is one of the most biologically diverse river systems in the Midwest. Over 80 state and federally listed plant and animal species are found in the Riverway. Most notable are the 40 species of native unionid mussels, including two federally listed species. Protecting rare, threatened, and endangered species of vegetation and wildlife while, at the same time, providing the public with recreational and aesthetic opportunities to enjoy the Riverway, is a major task of all federal, state, and local agencies as well as private individuals sharing jurisdiction of the Riverway. A strategically located NPS presence is needed to coordinate the multiple tiers of jurisdiction inherent in management of the Riverway. Seven state parks, three state forests, four state wildlife management areas, and seven state natural areas in Wisconsin and one scientific natural area in Minnesota are within or adjacent to the boundaries of the Riverway. There are approximately 12,000 acres of county-managed lands along the upper reaches of the Riverway. Zoning regulations, building codes, air pollution, urban runoff, waste water discharge, and solid waste disposal from seven incorporated villages and cities, utility crossings, and bridge crossings all play a role in affecting Riverway resources and require NPS coordination.

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway lies within a day’s drive of Minneapolis/St. Paul, and direct and indirect impacts on Riverway resources are increasing—especially in the south. A new interstate bridge crossing and numerous bridge replacements or additions have been proposed along with gas and electric line crossings, and other actions potentially threatening the integrity and biological diversity of the Lower St. Croix River. Invasive exotic species such as zebra mussels (already in the Lower St. Croix River) and purple loosestrife, and their accidental spread by human activities (including boating), are other key concerns in overall Riverway management.

The existing NPS Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility is open year-round and is the closest visitor contact location to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. The NPS Namekagon and Marshland Education Centers, located further north along the Riverway, are open to groups by reservation. The Namekagon Visitor Center is also open to the public during

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the summer months. A leased facility located in Stillwater, MN, south of St. Croix Falls, was closed in 2001 and is not available for future use. The Marshland Center is the only NPS facility actually designed as a visitor's center. The Namekagon facility at Trego, WI, and the St. Croix Falls facilities were originally a tavern and a motel complex, respectively.

Annual visitation at the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility has declined over the last decade from over 17,000 in 1991 to less than 10,000 in 2001. The documented historic peak in annual visitation at St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility is approximately 25,000. Although the current St. Croix Falls NPS facility fronts the St. Croix River and provides canoe access, frontage is limited, and there is limited undeveloped land area to use in outdoor classroom activities.

Administratively and logistically, the NPS Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility is in a relatively good location along the Riverway since most visitation as well as materials and supplies originate from areas to the south. Additionally, St. Croix Falls is near the mid point of the Riverway, there is a break between the Upper and Lower Riverway with their somewhat different management concerns at the hydroelectric dam of St. Croix Falls, WI/Taylor's Falls, MN.

Riverway management has projected the following additional staff that would need office space at Riverway Headquarters.

- Cultural Resources Specialist
- Landscape Architect
- Computer Specialist
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Educational Partnerships team Program Assistant
- Lower District Ranger
- Lower District Protection Staff (Two permanent positions)
- Lower District Protection Staff (Three seasonal positions)
- Biological Technician (Two seasonal positions)
- Educator (Three seasonal positions)

The current St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility was constructed in the late 1960's and purchased in 1976. Former motel office, lobby areas, and rooms have been converted to NPS office and storage space. The former motel bar and restaurant area serves as the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility/Exhibits, which contains exhibits and a small auditorium. The facility has numerous structural and design deficiencies documented over the years and briefly enumerated in the Purpose and Need Section of this document. The General Management Plan (GMP) for the Upper St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers also discusses the problems with the current facility and recommends formulation of a development concept plan to address repair and/or redesign of the existing facility or construction of a new facility to meet management needs. A Program Management Information System (PMIS) Project Detail Sheet: Complete Report was first prepared for this proposed project in 1996 (Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility, St. Croix National Scenic River, PMIS Number 9119, Package Number SACN 9119). This EA addresses site planning for the proposed project in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

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2.2 Relationship to Other Actions and Plans

The General Management Plan (GMP), Upper St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was approved and a Finding of No Significant Impact based on an Environmental Assessment of the GMP was signed in July 1998. One of the recommendations of the GMP under Future Plans and Research Required (Headquarters Building Deficiencies) was, *“A development concept plan should be prepared for repair and/or redesign of the existing facility or construction of a new facility or facilities to meet management needs.”*

The Final Cooperative Management Plan for the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway along with the accompanying Environmental Impact Statement and signed Record of Decision were completed in January 2002. The Lower St. Croix Management Commission comprised of the NPS, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as voting members prepared these documents. The site planning and compliance for these documents was prepared in accordance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The continuing need for close coordination with state and other agencies in managing the Lower St. Croix where development pressure is highest highlights the importance of maintaining a Riverway Headquarters site near its present location within the Riverway.

Other regional and joint agency planning efforts mentioned in the GMP generally focus more on management of the river’s biological communities throughout the Riverway rather than on administrative issues and visitor contact. However, NPS participation and management related to these planning efforts require a regional presence for effective administration and enforcement. The regional and joint agency planning efforts include:

- A Watershed Stewardship Statement prepared by the Lower St. Croix Planning Task Force
- The St. Croix Mussel Management Plan
- A Fisheries Management Plan
- An Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan
- A St. Croix River Basin Water Resources Management Plan
- The National Water Quality Assessment Program
- The St. Croix Zebra Mussel Task Force Action Plan

Other planning efforts mentioned in the GMP are: resource management plans for St. Croix and St. Croix Wild River State Parks, St. Croix and Chongwatana State Forests, the Governor Knowles State Forest Master Plan, comprehensive land use plans for county forests, and the Land and Resource Management Plan, Chequamegon National Forest.

With its location just north of the downtown district of St. Croix Falls, WI, the existing site of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility is embedded with the planning matrix of the City of St. Croix Falls. The city has plans for a number of actions that could either directly or indirectly impact the siting decision for a new NPS facility. Some of the city’s plans include:

- Purchasing 6 acres of property north of the existing NPS site and south of the marina for development into a possible RV camping area
- Extending the existing river trail to connect with the existing NPS headquarters site
- Developing the wedge-shaped property abutting the south boundary of the existing NPS site and fronting the river. This includes construction of a public fishing pier.
- Constructing a band shell for summer concerts immediately north of the city’s existing river overlook in downtown

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- Implementing a downtown revitalization plan to include improved lighting, street pavers, and assistance to local business owners to upgrade storefronts to an architectural standard.

The Economic Development Council of the City of Taylors Falls, MN, developed a Strategic Guide in April 2001. This Guide identifies a number of potential future projects, many of which focus on changes in the downtown area of Taylors Falls. A potential project within the Strategic Guide that addresses the vicinity of a possible new NPS facility site (Heritage Site) on the Minnesota side of the river is the Gateway/St. Croix Valley Trail. The Gateway/St. Croix Valley Trail would create a non-motorized trail through the City of Taylors Falls and Interstate Park to the Wild Mountain Recreation Area and Wild River State Park eight miles north of the city. The planned trail would complete an eastern portion of a loop trail in Chisago County that would link ten communities, two state parks, the National Scenic Riverway, and major private recreation providers. The most likely partner for this project would be the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

2.3 Issues

Issues related to a new Administrative Facility/Visitor Contact Facility were initially identified through internal and external scoping involving NPS staff, contract personnel, and the general public. Public scoping meetings were held at the Riverway Headquarters in St. Croix Falls, WI, on October 24, 2001. Additional issue areas were identified through the NPS Choosing-By-Advantages process conducted in March 2002. Construction of a new facility on any site, including the existing site, would involve:

- Site clearing could include the removal of trees and other vegetation and possible direct or indirect impacts on wetlands at construction sites as well as along equipment access routes and any utility line extensions.
- Cutting, filling, and grading of soils as part of building site and roadway/parking facility site preparation.
- Utility modifications possibly including relocation of existing aboveground utilities, installation of underground utilities, and extension of utilities.
- Changes in impervious surface areas as a result of new building construction, new roadway/parking facility construction, and removal of existing facilities.
- Changes in local traffic patterns related to possible changes in local surface street configurations, new access road construction from existing streets and highways, warranting of new traffic signals, and changes in the Riverway Headquarters location.
- Demolition of existing facilities along with the associated generation of construction wastes and opportunities for redevelopment.
- Use of energy and materials in both construction and long-term operations of new facilities.
- Changes in local socioeconomic impacts related to connectivity of NPS facilities to local communities and opportunities for shared community resources.

Construction of a new facility on any site other than the existing NPS site could also involve changes in land use. Construction on any site not currently owned by NPS could require development of legal agreements with local municipalities regarding land ownership and use. The NPS-owned Indianhead Flowage site could also require some level of environmental cleanup should contamination from previous land uses be found.

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2.4 Applicable Regulatory Requirements and Coordination

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate the impacts of the reasonable alternatives described in Section 3.0. The EA is prepared in accordance with the *National Park Service's Director's Order No. 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making*, and its accompanying Handbook, and the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (PL 91-190, 42 USC 4321-4247). Detailed procedures for developing this document comply with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

Regulatory requirements, which may be applicable to the activities addressed in this EA, include:

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act addressing any activities directly or indirectly impacting prehistoric or historic archaeological sites, historic structures, or cultural landscapes eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Section 106 consultation also includes coordination with any Native American Tribes as appropriate.
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permitting and state water quality certification through Section 401 of the Act.
- Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 related to placement of fill in navigable waters.
- Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Protection
- Wisconsin Administrative Code 500, General Solid Waste Management Requirements
- Minnesota Statutes Chapter 115A: Waste Management Section 411

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3.0 ALTERNATIVES

As a result of the early scoping process, which included a public scoping meeting and coordination with state, local, and federal agencies, six alternatives are analyzed in this EA. The alternatives evaluated are:

- Alternative A—No-Action Alternative
- Alternative B—Remodel Existing Facility
- Alternative C—New Facility at Current Site
- Alternative D—New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site
- Alternative E—New Facility at the Heritage Coalition Site
- Alternative F—Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility and Addition to the Polk County Information Center

Although the proposed action alternatives are at the conceptual design stage, a constant element of all action alternatives is the basic building program. The approximate square footage of the proposed facilities dedicated to each function would be as follows:

- Headquarters—10,000 square feet
- Visitor Contact—2,500 square feet
- Loading/Supply—600 square feet

Construction would also include a 60-car (approximately 18,000 square feet) parking area, utilities and landscaping. The visitor contact portion would incorporate rustic design elements. The entire facility would meet NPS sustainability standards and would be designed to showcase energy efficiency. Possible locations of the alternatives are shown in Figure 1 (page 3).

Alternatives that were considered but dismissed from further detailed consideration in this EA are presented in Section 3.8. The summary impact comparison matrix for all alternatives considered in this EA is presented in Section 3.11.

3.1 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

The No-Action Alternative would maintain the existing NPS facility with only routine maintenance and stop-gap measures to address structural, utility, access, and other problems identified with the facility (Figure 2). The major structural problems, which include foundation settling, water leakage, and inadequate load-bearing capacity would continue. The existing layout of office, laboratory, exhibits, and visitor contact space would remain. Existing health and life-safety concerns associated with the electrical system as well as moisture problems and mold contamination would continue.

The existing spring and trout pond on the property would be maintained in its present state. The close proximity to the river would be maintained. Improvements in building energy efficiency would be minimal.

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3.2 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

This alternative would involve major renovation of the existing facility in an attempt to correct or improve upon existing building and design deficiencies. However, the basic building footprint and layout would remain the same and the existing structural problems, particularly problems with foundation settling, groundwater infiltration, and inadequate load-bearing capacity, would be difficult and expensive to correct (Figure 2).

Connectivity with the City of St. Croix Falls, WI, would be maintained. The spring and trout pond would be preserved. This alternative would also promote sustainability from the standpoint of building reuse and minimizing the use of new construction materials and site disturbance. Staff relocation into local temporary office space would be necessary during renovation. Estimated gross construction cost for Alternative B is \$1,560,790. Gross cost is based on labor and materials plus a 20 percent design contingency, 8 percent for construction management, and 10 percent construction contingency.

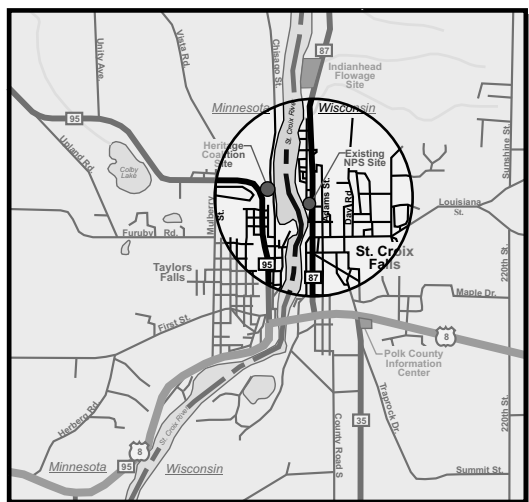
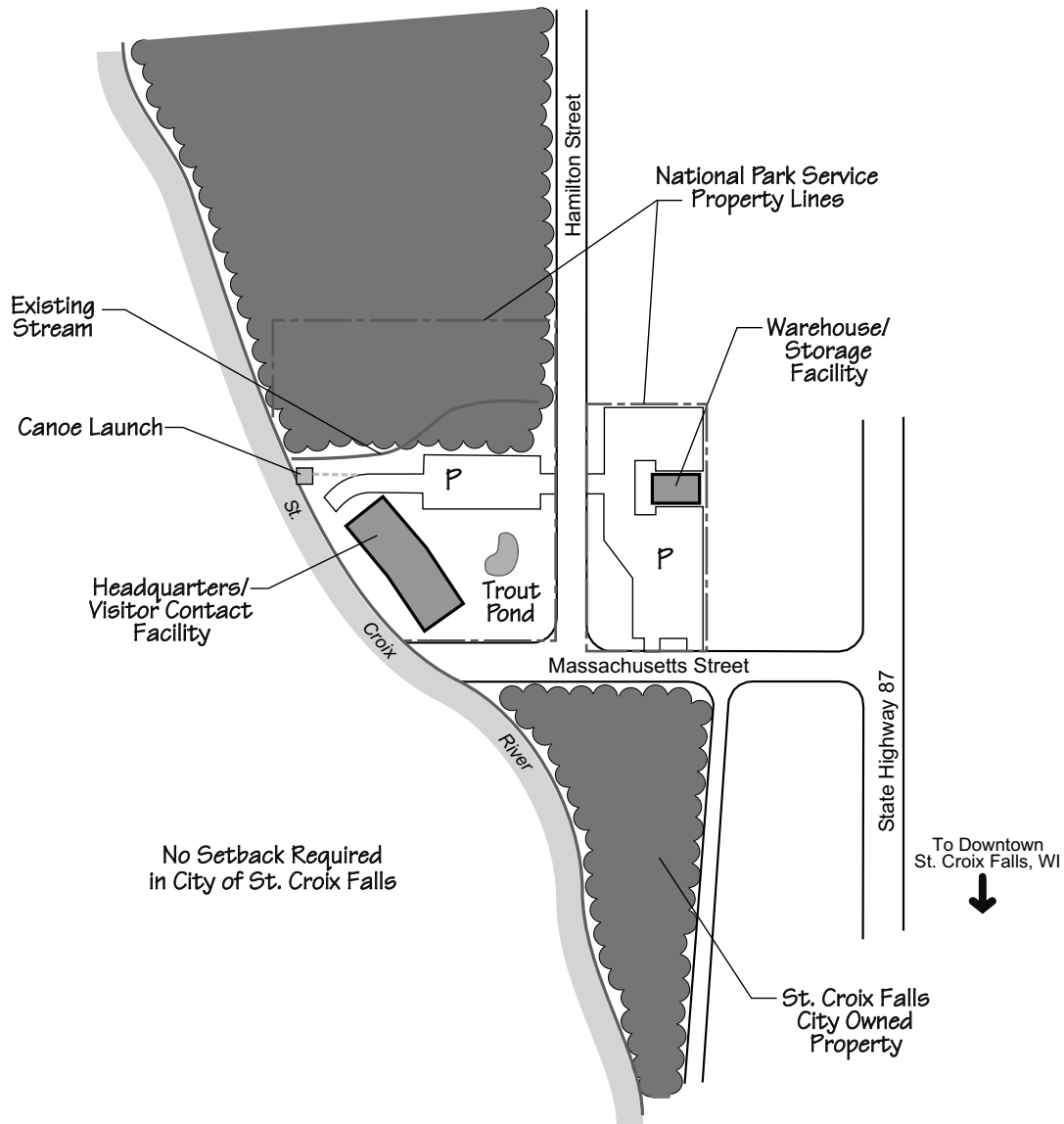
3.3 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

With this alternative, a new facility would be constructed on the property of the existing Riverway Headquarters, which is already impacted by existing structures and pavements (Figure 3). Depending upon whether or not the City of St. Croix Falls agrees to remove the southern end of Hamilton Street currently dividing NPS property, the new facility would be built either roughly where the street is now located or east of the street (if the street remains). Removal of the southern end of Hamilton Street through NPS property would involve construction of a cul-de-sac immediately north of NPS property and relocation of utility lines. With either scenario, the existing facility would be demolished subsequent to completion of the new facility. The area between the new facility and the river (including the existing spring and trout pond) would be re-landscaped and undergo site restoration with modifications to existing river access and enhancement of outdoor classroom opportunities including possible installation of a small (less than 1-acre) constructed wetland.

The new facility would be designed to take advantage of southern exposures for solar heating, and all new construction would allow incorporation of maximum energy efficiencies and other sustainable design features. Both existing and projected space requirements for staff operations, visitor contact, and exhibits/curation would be designed into the new facility. Adjacent residential housing would require vegetative and other buffering. Estimated gross construction cost for Alternative C with existing roads vacated is \$4,725,802. If existing roads remain, the estimated gross construction cost is \$4,559,909.

3.4 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Alternative D involves new construction at the NPS-owned Indianhead Flowage Site approximately one mile north of the current Riverway Headquarters site and adjacent to the northern boundary of St. Croix Falls, WI, Lion's Park (Figure 4). The Indianhead Flowage site comprises approximately 160 acres of undeveloped and largely wooded land. An NPS storage facility is located on a small portion of the site adjacent to State Route 87 that was formerly occupied by Ray's Garage (a gas station and automobile repair facility). A former rural homestead site occupies an area near the northern end of the Indianhead Flowage site. Native and introduced vegetation cover most of this site which is also crisscrossed by small perennial

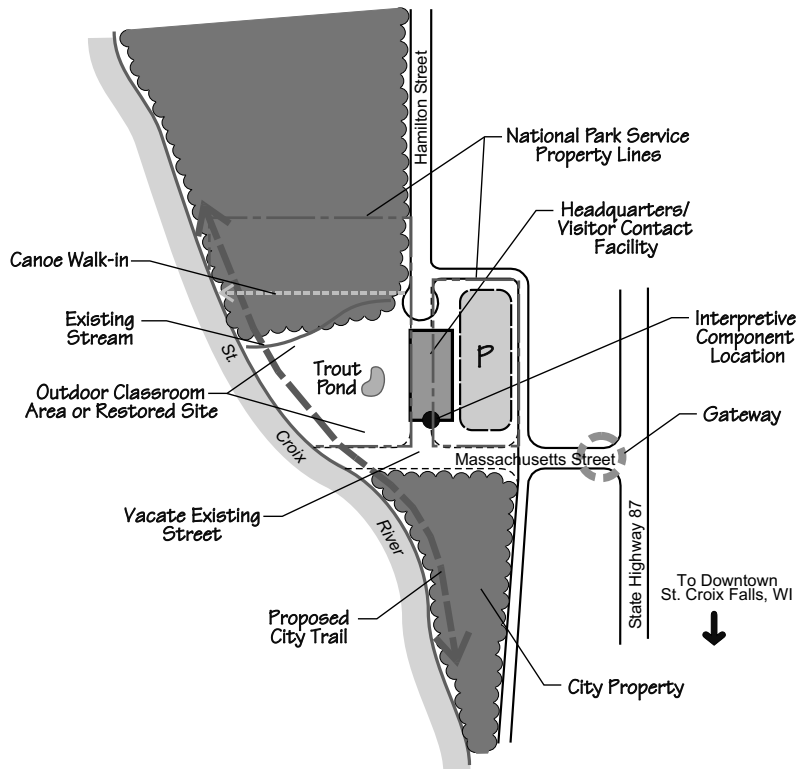


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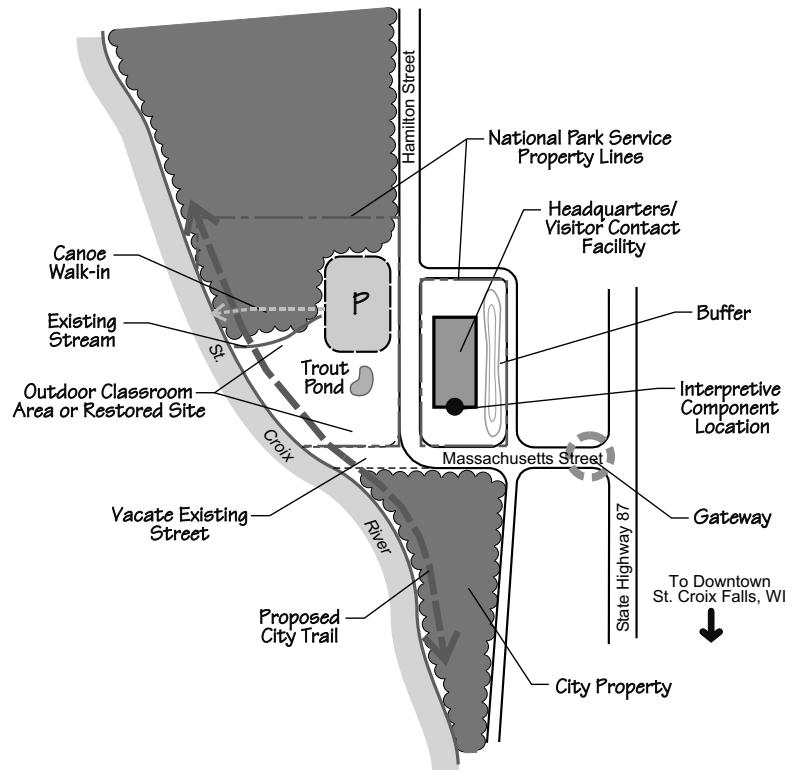
Shown for relationships only. Exact size, configuration, and location on site are to be determined during the design process.

Figure 2
Alternatives A and B -
Existing Site/Existing Facilities
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility
 St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

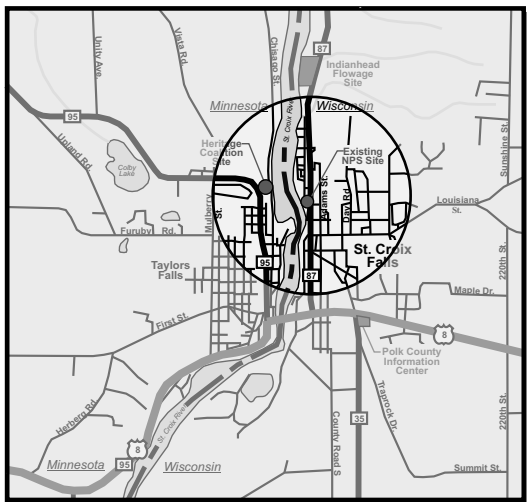
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Roads Vacated



Roads Not Vacated

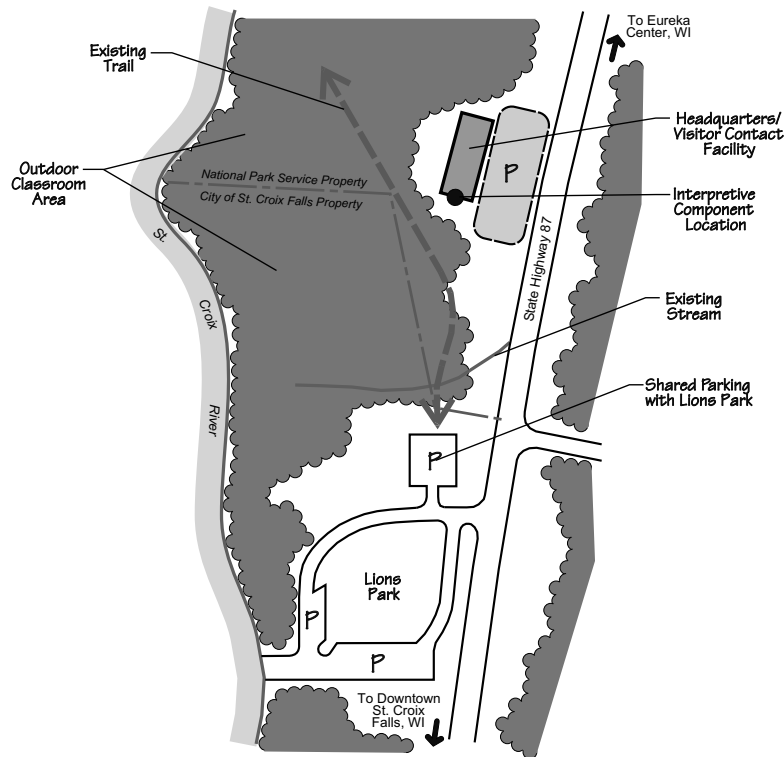


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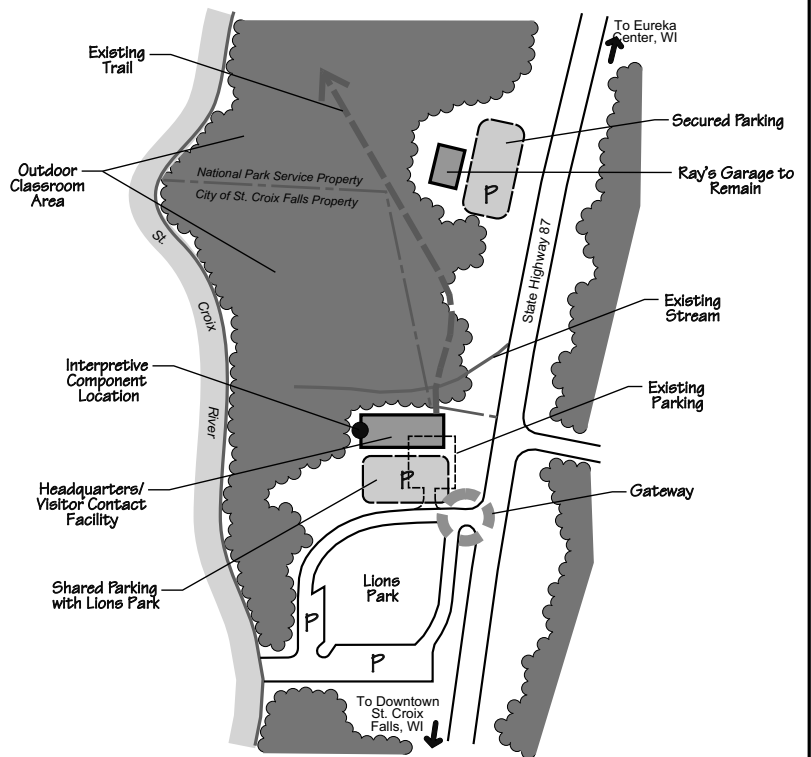
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Figure 3
Alternative C -
Existing Site/New Facilities
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

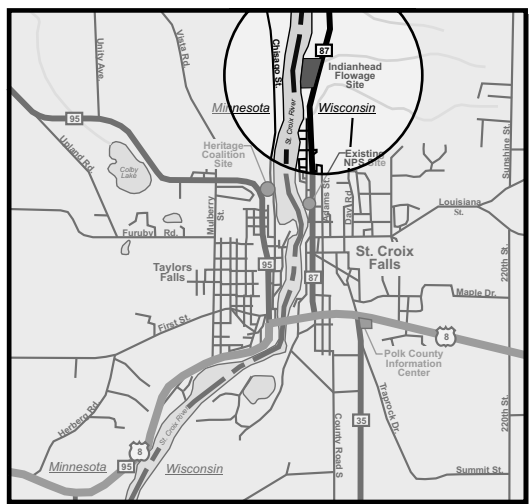
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Location 1



Location 2



Not to Scale

Shown for relationships only. Exact size, configuration, and location on site are to be determined during the design process.

Figure 4
Alternative D -
Indianhead Flowage Site
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility
 St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

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streams and associated wetlands. A developed trail (a section of the Ice Age National Trail) traverses the site, and a primitive riverside campsite is located in the northern portion of the site.

Construction at the Indianhead Flowage Site would require full site development including additional clearing of vegetation and extension of utilities. Depending on final siting, the existing NPS maintenance facility on the former Ray's Garage site would need to be demolished. The construction season for the Indianhead Flowage Site would be shorter given the lack of existing paved surfaces for construction equipment staging.

The location of the Indianhead Flowage Site adjacent to Lion's Park would afford the opportunity to possibly partner with the City of St. Croix Falls, WI, in site development and the sharing of facilities/resources. This alternative could be configured several different ways on the Indianhead Flowage site. The new facility could either be located closer to Lion's Park with possible shared parking or it could be located somewhat further north in the vicinity of the NPS storage facility (former Ray's Garage).

The existing NPS headquarters facility would be demolished with this alternative. However, the NPS would maintain the existing site as a day-use area and would pursue restoration of the site. Estimated gross construction cost for Alternative D is \$4,601,318 without demolition of the NPS maintenance building and \$4,741,976 with demolition.

3.5 Alternative E (New Facility at the Heritage Coalition Site)

This alternative would involve construction of a new facility along Minnesota State Route 95 in north Taylors Falls, MN (Figure 5). This site is owned by the St. Croix Valley Heritage Coalition and was a former gravel/borrow pit area used by Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). The St. Croix Valley Heritage Coalition originally planned to construct a Scandinavian cultural center on the site owned by the City of Taylors Falls. However, these plans have been abandoned. Fill material was placed on the site after gravel extraction activities terminated. MnDOT still uses a maintenance storage yard facility immediately north of the Heritage Coalition Site. The 11-acre Heritage Coalition Site is situated on a bluff with a view of the St. Croix River to the east. A steep slope dropping off sharply to the east, a county road and several private land parcels separate this bluff site from the St. Croix River. The site has an access road leading from SR 95 to a small parking area, a constructed observation area, and a small open pavilion. Some or all of the existing paved parking area and roadway may or may not be used should this alternative be selected. Most of the site is covered with introduced grasses and weeds although some native prairie vegetation is reportedly present. There are no wetlands, streams, or other surface waters on the site.

There is no direct access to the river from this site. Also, there are no connecting trails to this site although one is planned for the future. There are no utilities on site, and the fill placed on the site subsequent to termination of excavation activities is reportedly unsuitable for facility construction. Second and third growth vegetation growing along the edge of the bluff at the site restrict river views during the growing season.

The MnDOT maintenance facility north of the site is not a compatible land use. Other surrounding land uses are for moderate or low-density residential development. Estimated gross construction cost for Alternative E is \$4,951,054.

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3.6 Alternative F (Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility and Addition to the Polk County Information Center)

This alternative would involve constructing a building addition to the existing Polk County Information Center and St. Croix Falls City Office building located in the southeast corner of the intersection of Wisconsin SR 35 and U.S. 8. The site is along the Gandy Dancer Trail (a regional bike/snowmobile trail) east of downtown St. Croix Falls, WI (Figure 6). The addition would house the Riverway Visitor Contact Facility. The Riverway Headquarters would be located in the renovated existing Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility (see Alternative B).

The Polk County Information Center site has high visibility from major highways serving the area and is already familiar to bicyclists, snowmobilers, and others using the Gandy Dance Trail. However, the site is small, built out (completely developed), and far removed from the St. Croix River. The size constraint of this site is the reason that only the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility could be accommodated at this location. Estimated gross construction cost for this alternative is \$3,692,426.

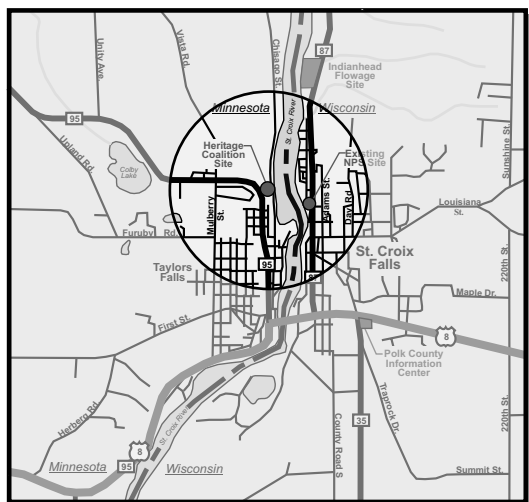
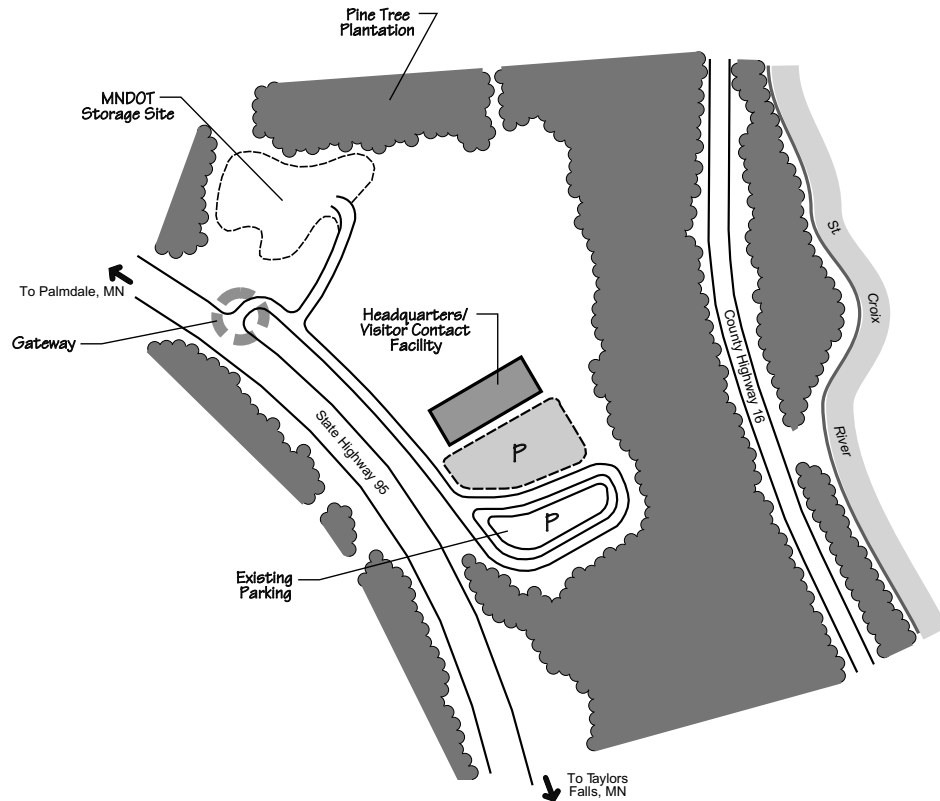
3.7 Mitigation Measures

3.7.1 Geology and Soils

Short-term impacts on soil erosion and concomitant sedimentation in adjacent surface waters will be mitigated during construction activities as part of Alternatives C, D, E, and F by incorporation of a variety of site-specific best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs will possibly include but not be limited to reducing soil disturbance to the maximum extent possible; using silt curtains, straw bales, and temporary detention ponds; and using fast-growing grasses or other vegetation to cover temporarily stockpiled soil. Monitoring and maintenance of all erosion control devices would occur throughout the duration of the proposed project.

3.7.2 Surface Water Quality and Wetlands

Short-term impacts on surface water and wetlands adjacent to any construction activity will be mitigated as indicated above for geology and soils. Similar to the conditions mentioned above in geology and soils, the monitoring and maintenance of all erosion control devices would occur throughout the duration of the proposed project. Long-term impacts on surface water quality and adjacent wetlands would be mitigated through maximum micromanagement of storm water runoff from any new facilities constructed as part of Alternatives C, D, E, and F. Low-impact development methods that attempt to mimic predevelopment site hydrology will be employed to store, infiltrate, evaporate and detain storm water runoff to the maximum extent possible. Vegetated buffers of 75 to 100 feet will be maintained adjacent to all surface waters including the spring-fed trout pond on the existing site for Alternatives B, C, and F. Overland sheet flow through grassy swales or, preferably through natural vegetative cover will be maximized in siting and designing any new facility. Techniques to minimize impervious surfaces will be employed in the design of all new facilities including parking lots and roadways. These techniques include, but are not limited to the use of pervious pavement in parking spaces, installation of bioretention cells to trap parking lot and rooftop runoff, and use of geocells in areas where only emergency vehicle access is needed. Although more of a potential enhancement than a mitigation, Alternatives C, D, E, and F would provide the opportunity to construct a wetlands area in the current location of the Riverway Headquarters building after



Not to Scale

Shown for relationships only. Exact size, configuration, and location on site are to be determined during the design process.

Figure 5
Alternative E -
Heritage Coalition Site
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility
 St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

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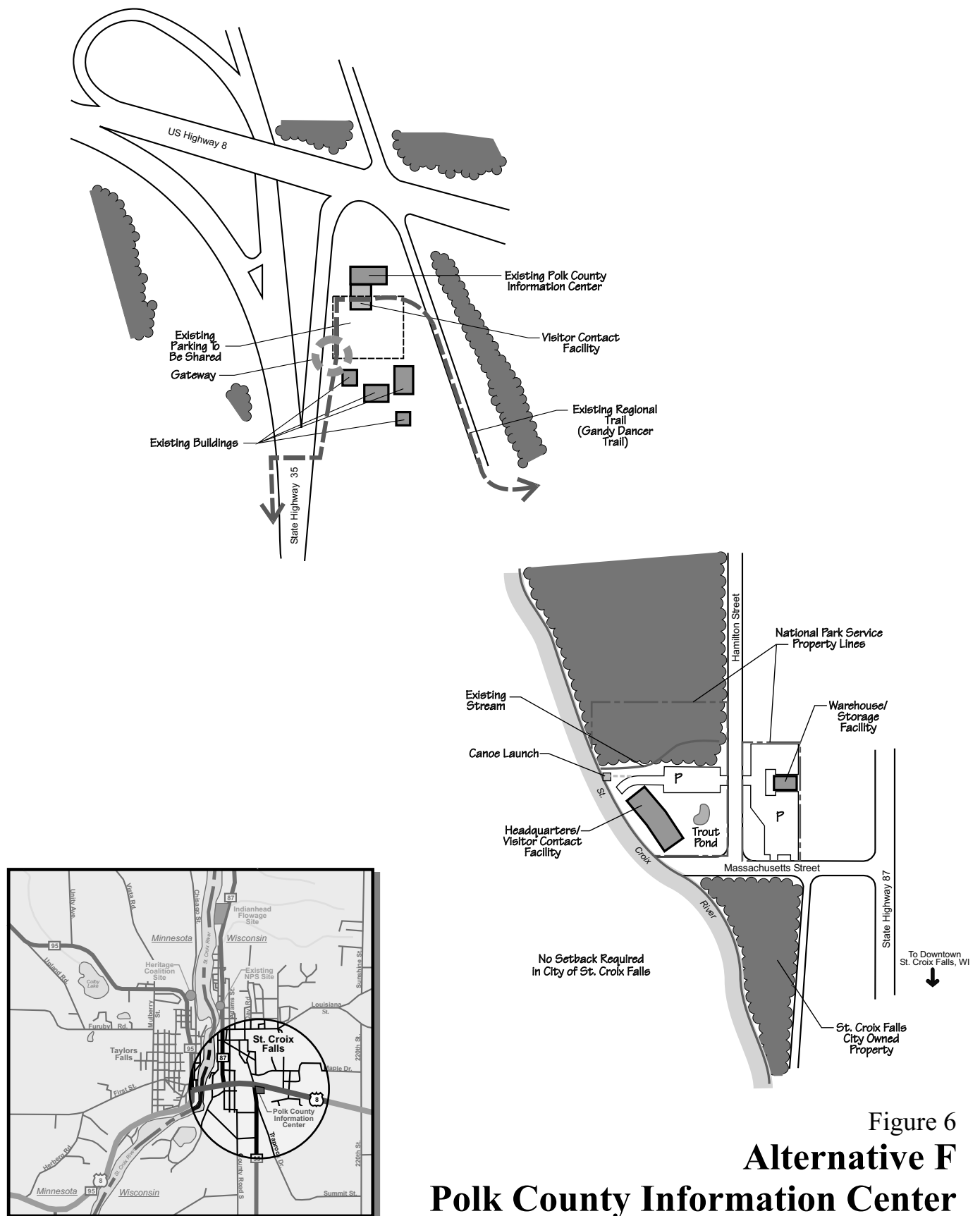


Figure 6

Alternative F

Polk County Information Center

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility

St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

Not to Scale

Shown for relationships only. Exact size, configuration, and location on site are to be determined during the design process.

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demolition. Water for this wetland could be provided by the spring currently supplying water to the trout pond at the Riverway Headquarters.

3.7.3 Ecological Resources

Any wetlands community impacts at the Indianhead Flowage site associated with Alternative D will be mitigated by constructing new wetlands. The most likely site for wetlands construction is the existing headquarters site after demolition of current headquarters building as discussed above. The size of the wetlands mitigation would depend on the quantity and quality of wetlands impacted at Indianhead Flowage. Forested wetland areas would be the most likely impacted, while the replacement/constructed wetlands would be non-forested. This would probably result in the requirement for a higher replacement ratio since forested wetlands are often considered higher value wetlands than are non-forested wetlands. A very small amount of forested wetland plant community providing habitat for the state-rare false mermaid plant could be impacted by Alternative C (existing roadway remaining) depending upon final siting. In this case, on-site wetland mitigation would, again, be the most likely option.

Impacts to non-wetland forest communities associated with Alternative D would be mitigated by at least a 2:1 replacement for all trees over four inches in diameter at breast height (dbh). Reforestation or afforestation efforts would be determined based on available NPS land and sites where benefits would be maximized. Expansion of the small wooded area at the existing headquarters site would be one possible location for forest expansion.

Impacts to existing old field vegetation at the Heritage Coalition Site (Alternative E) will be mitigated by establishment of native prairie vegetation in an area adjacent to the new headquarters facility. Seed bank materials for prairie establishment would be collected from remnant prairies known to occur within the region.

3.7.4 Utilities, Energy, and Riverway Operations

Energy-saving construction materials and designs will be incorporated into new building construction or existing building renovation (Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F) to minimize heating and cooling requirements. Alternative energy sources including active and passive solar heating along with wind generation will be evaluated for incorporation into new or renovated buildings. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles will be used in the siting, design, and construction of all new buildings. Low-maintenance landscaping will be incorporated into site design taking into consideration integrated pest management, native plant materials, innovative storm water techniques, sound urban forestry techniques, and water-efficient practices. Lighting of facilities will minimize night sky light pollution using guidelines available from the International Dark Sky Association and other sources.

3.7.5 Mitigation Measures Common to All Action Alternatives

There are several mitigation measures that are common to alternatives C, D, E, and F, however because Alternative B would require minimal exterior construction, the only mitigation measures common to all alternatives are the use of energy saving construction and materials usage as detailed in Section 3.7.4 above.

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3.8 Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

3.8.1 Osceola Site

NPS personnel briefly examined a potential site adjacent to the St. Croix River near Osceola, WI, approximately five miles south of St. Croix Falls. The site had river access, though the buildable area was too small and it had a difficult and steep access. Because of these factors, this potential site was eliminated from further consideration.

3.8.2 Ice Age Visitor Center at Interstate Park, Wisconsin

NPS and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) personnel also discussed the possible expansion and joint use of the Ice Age Visitor Center (visitors center) at Interstate Park, WI, approximately one mile south of St. Croix Falls. However, WDNR was not in favor of co-location of NPS and WDNR facilities. Additionally, the Center has no direct access to the river. Therefore, this alternative was also rejected and will not be further discussed in this document.

3.9 Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in NEPA, which is guided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that "...the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101." Using the six criteria from Section 101 detailed below, it was determined that Alternative C, New Facility at Existing Site, provides the greatest level of protection of resources of the alternatives evaluated in this EA. The variation of Alternative C that includes removal of the existing portion of Hamilton Street currently dividing the site would be preferred over the Alternative C variation, which involves leaving the existing roadway configuration. However, regardless of the variation, use of the existing site for a new facility is the environmentally preferred alternative. The rationale for this determination is provided for each criterion in the following discussion.

Criterion 1—Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.

By restricting proposed construction to the property already owned by the NPS, which is already largely developed and is within the community of St. Croix Falls; Alternative C emphasizes good environmental stewardship that minimizes additional disturbance of natural ecological communities (such as would be the case with Alternative D at Indianhead Flowage). Additionally, Alternative C shows a commitment to remaining a more integral part of a community of which the Park Service has been a part for over 30 years. Alternative C would allow the long-term ecological enhancement of the existing site through various forms of site restoration such as wetlands creation, use of native plant species in landscaping, etc. Unlike Alternatives E and F, Alternative C also maintains a closer long-term NPS physical connection to the resource for which it serves as a trustee for future generations. This physical proximity is important in terms of educating the public about the resource and in maintaining a better sense among NPS staff of their commitment to the long-term ecological health and proper use of Riverway resources. A new facility on the present Riverway Headquarters site, as opposed to continued use of the existing facility (Alternatives A and B), also would further enhance the ability of the NPS to communicate the importance of sustainable development to the public by showcasing green building/landscape design features within the context of the Riverway. A new

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facility would also help insure long-term high morale among NPS staff responsible for monitoring, protecting, and interpreting the Riverway to the public.

Criterion 2—Assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.

Alternative C best fulfills Criterion 2 by incorporating long-term improvements in aesthetics at the existing Headquarters site through site restoration and enhancement, construction of an aesthetically pleasing and efficiently operating new facility, providing a clean and safe indoor environment for staff and visitors, enhancing disabled visitor access to NPS facilities, and providing modern office space for staff. Removal of the existing roadway (Hamilton Street) dividing the site would further enhance long-term visitor safety at the existing Riverway Headquarters site. Alternative A would result in a continuation of the unhealthful (airborne molds) and unsafe (electrical system problems, uneven floors, overcrowded office space, etc.) conditions found in the existing Riverway Headquarters facility. Alternative B would alleviate some of the health and safety issues in the existing facility. However, it would not result in long-term improvements to overcrowding and a generally inefficient building layout. Difficult access for disabled visitors would also continue with Alternatives A and B as would the existing on-site roadway configuration. Alternative D would also largely fulfill Criterion 2. However, public safety associated with the existing site after the Riverway Headquarters would move to Indianhead Flowage could be a concern. There would no longer be a regular NPS presence at the existing Headquarters site, which is located within a residential area of St. Croix Falls and is adjacent to the river near the hydroelectric dam (and possibly near constructed on-site wetlands). This would result in a possible public safety concern. Alternative D would also encourage additional traffic through residential areas along SR 87 north of the downtown section of St. Croix Falls. Alternative E would move the NPS presence away from its present site, thus leaving NPS-owned property within a municipal/residential area without a presence of NPS staff or facilities. Steep slopes also present along the eastern border of the Alternative E site, which could present a safety concern for visitors. Additionally, SR 95 is reportedly a busy highway during peak visitor seasons, and sight distances associated with elevation changes and curves near the Alternative E site could pose a traffic hazard for visitors entering and exiting the site. Alternative F would have long-term detrimental impacts on NPS staff productivity resulting from separate administrative and visitor contact facilities. This situation would create additional driving between the two sites and a loss of flexibility in using personnel in dual roles of administration and interpretation. This would be especially important during times of the year when visitation levels are low, and a full-time staffing of the visitor contact facility would not be necessary. The additional driving for NPS staff between facilities would also increase safety concerns.

Criterion 3—Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.

The advantages of Alternative C over Alternatives A, B, and D related to Criterion 3 stem from the fact that, Alternative C continues to use the existing and historically ecologically disturbed site but with a new efficient and accessible building. Further development on the existing Headquarters site largely avoids disturbing or degrading other areas (such as the Indianhead Flowage site) containing a substantial amount of undisturbed second-growth forest. Alternative C also maintains an NPS presence at the existing municipal/residential location thus providing continuing oversight on the activities of the public adjacent to the river and the hydroelectric dam. Although Alternative E would enhance the existing Heritage Coalition site, the site's remoteness from the river reduces the NPS presence adjacent to the resource for which it has responsibility and fails to enhance a sense of what the Riverway is about. There are also the

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additional concerns related to traffic safety at a site entrance along SR 95, steep slopes adjacent to the eastern boundary, and the possibility of long-term structural problems associated with unknown geologic properties of the site. Alternative F presents safety issues as discussed under Criterion 2 and risks the long-term loss of NPS identity as an agency with a role and responsibilities to Riverway resources much different from local commercial interests.

Criterion 4—Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.

Alternative C best meets Criterion 4 by keeping the NPS presence within the Riverway boundaries where its responsibilities in preserving the historic, cultural and natural heritage of the Riverway are found and are associated in the mind of the visiting public. Through new construction on the existing site, Alternative C provides a modern, efficient base from which the Riverway is administered, and a place where visitors can learn the necessity and importance of preserving the St. Croix's heritage. Using and restoring the existing Riverway Headquarters site can, in itself, be the source of a story of the implications "staying put" and refraining corporately and personally from constructing in "greenfields" such as would be the case with Alternative D. The improved curatorial facilities associated with Alternative C for historic, cultural and natural artifacts associated with the Riverway would also help preserve and exhibit these items in a much improved way over what could be accomplished with Alternatives A and B. The remoteness of the Alternative E site from the river makes it more difficult to "tell the river's story" to visitors, and would remove NPS from the same level of closeness to the river that they now experience. Although difficult to measure, there is merit in remaining physically close to the resource in terms of commitment to its protection and interpretation. By incorporating the NPS Visitor Contact Facility into the Polk County Information Center facility, Alternative F would result in confusing the historic, cultural, and natural heritage values of the Riverway with commercial use of the resource in the eyes of the visiting public. This alternative would also do little to improve curatorial conditions for various historic, cultural, and natural artifacts. There would not be adequate (or possibly any) curation space at the Polk County Information Center, and visitors would seldom be inclined to visit any exhibits remaining at the renovated administrative facility in north of downtown St. Croix Falls.

Criterion 5—Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and wide sharing of life's amenities.

All the alternatives located in the St. Croix Falls, WI, and Taylors Fall, MN, area are in a good location to serve the growing regional population, which is concentrated to south in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Alternatives A, B, and E fall short of permitting high standards of living in terms of NPS staff work space. The current situation within the existing building creates health hazards, crowding and other problems associated with a substandard building. These conditions can only be partially improved within the existing structure even if it is totally converted to administrative space. The existing building also presents accessibility problems for physically challenged persons including staff. The advantage of Alternative C over Alternatives D and E is that Alternative C makes use of the existing land resources owned by the NPS and requires no extension of utilities or roadways—an additional budgetary strain taking financial resources away from the new facility itself.

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Criterion 6—Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

As opposed to Alternatives A, B and F; Alternatives C, D, and E would all allow the incorporation of LEED principles in new construction including the use of passive and active solar and, possibly, wind power generation. Alternative E would offer the greatest flexibility in incorporating renewable energy systems into building design although some renewable energy systems could also be incorporated into Alternatives C and D. The need to clear some existing second-growth forest to construct Alternative D would not “enhance the quality of renewable resources.”

3.10 Agency-Preferred Alternative

The Agency-Preferred Alternative is also Alternative C regardless of which specific siting variations is selected.

3.11 Comparison of Alternative Effects

Table 1 presents a summary comparison of the effects of the alternatives based on the evaluations of the impact topics in the Environmental Consequences Section of this EA. The terms used to define the magnitude or intensity of the effects are described for each resource area in Section 5.

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Table 1
Summary Comparison of Alternatives and Effects

Impact Topic	Alternative A (No-Action)	Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)	Alternative C (New Facility at Existing Site)	Alternative D (Indianhead Flowage)	Alternative E (Heritage Coalition)	Alternative F (Polk County)
Geology and Soils	Negligible	Negligible	Possible moderate short-term and/or long-term adverse on trout pond spring; moderate short-term adverse on erosion/sedimentation; moderate long-term beneficial on St. Croix River from increased buffer and/or constructed wetlands	Moderate short-term adverse on erosion/sedimentation; negligible impacts on groundwater resources	Minor, short-term adverse on soils; negligible long term	Negligible
Surface Water Quality	Negligible	Negligible	Minor, short-term adverse from construction; moderate, long-term beneficial from increased buffer and/or constructed wetlands	Moderate short-term and long-term adverse impacts from construction and increased impervious surfaces	Negligible	Negligible at existing Riverway Headquarters site; minor, long-term adverse at Polk County Information Center site
Wetlands/ Other Waters of the US	Negligible	Negligible	Minor, short- and long-term adverse on other waters of the US; negligible on wetlands or moderate, long-term beneficial on wetlands if on-site wetlands constructed	Minor, short-term adverse from construction or moderate, long-term beneficial on wetlands if wetlands constructed at existing Headquarters site	Negligible; or moderate, long-term beneficial on wetlands if wetlands constructed at existing Headquarters site	Negligible
Ecological Resources (Vegetation and Wildlife)	Negligible	Negligible	Moderate, long-term adverse on existing natural terrestrial plant community; minor long-term adverse impact on wildlife; possible moderate, long-term beneficial from any constructed wetlands	Moderate, long-term adverse on terrestrial plant community; minor long-term adverse impact on wildlife; possible moderate long-term beneficial from any constructed wetlands at the existing Headquarters site or on site	Minor, short-term adverse on old field vegetation and wildlife; possible moderate, long-term beneficial from on-site prairie installation; possible moderate; long-term beneficial from any constructed wetlands at the existing Headquarter site	Negligible

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Impact Topic	Alternative A (No-Action)	Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)	Alternative C (New Facility at Existing Site)	Alternative D (Indianhead Flowage)	Alternative E (Heritage Coalition)	Alternative F (Polk County)
Solid and Hazardous Wastes	Negligible on waste generation; minor, short-term and long-term beneficial from avoidance of waste generation	Moderate, short-term adverse on solid and, possibly, special waste generation; negligible on hazardous wastes; minor, long-term beneficial from avoidance of waste generation	Moderate, short-term adverse on solid and, possibly, special waste generation; negligible on hazardous wastes	Moderate, short-term adverse on solid (site clearing) wastes and, possibly special wastes; possible moderate short-term adverse on hazardous wastes (petroleum-contaminated soil removal)	Moderate, short-term adverse on solid wastes and, possibly, special wastes; negligible on hazardous wastes	Moderate, short-term adverse on solid and, possibly, special waste generation; negligible on hazardous wastes; moderate, long-term beneficial from avoidance of waste generation
Visitor Experience And Aesthetic Resources	Negligible short-term, but moderate, long-term adverse on visitor experience, accessibility, and education; moderate long-term beneficial on maintaining present aesthetic setting	Minor, long-term beneficial on visitor accessibility and experience; moderate, long-term beneficial on indoor visitor education; moderate, short-term adverse on visitor experience and education during renovation; moderate, long-term beneficial on maintaining present aesthetic setting	Moderate, long-term beneficial on visitor accessibility and experience; long-term minor adverse on river view (aesthetics); minor, short-term adverse on accessibility during construction activities	Moderate, long-term beneficial on accessibility, visibility and visitor education; minor, long-term adverse on community connectivity	Moderate, long-term beneficial on visibility and accessibility; moderate, long-term adverse on St. Croix Falls connectivity and minor, long-term beneficial on Taylors Falls connectivity; moderate, long-term adverse on river access; moderate, long-term beneficial on indoor visitor education; moderate, long-term adverse on outdoor education	Moderate, long-term beneficial on visibility; moderate, long-term adverse on visitor experience and education; moderate, long-term adverse on aesthetics and river and community connectivity
Socioeconomic Factors	Negligible short-term and minor, long-term adverse on economic activity and community relations	Moderate short-term and long-term beneficial on economic activity and community relations; gross construction cost estimate is \$1,560,790	Moderate, short-term beneficial from construction; moderate, long-term beneficial on economic activity and community relations; gross construction cost estimate is \$4,725,802 with roads vacated, \$4,559,909 with roads remaining	Moderate, short-term beneficial from construction; minor, long-term adverse on economic activity; moderate, long-term beneficial on overall development in the Lion's Park area; gross construction cost estimate is \$4,741,976 with maintenance building demolition, \$4,601,318 without demolition	Moderate, short-term beneficial from construction; moderate, long-term adverse economic impact on St. Croix Falls; moderate, long-term beneficial impact on Taylors Falls; moderate, long-term adverse on St. Croix Falls community relations; moderate, long-term beneficial on Taylors Falls community relations; gross construction cost estimate is \$4,951,054	Minor, short-term beneficial from construction; minor, long-term beneficial on regional businesses; moderate, long-term adverse on local downtown St. Croix businesses; moderate, long-term beneficial from provision of community meeting space; gross construction cost estimate is \$3,692,426

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Impact Topic	Alternative A (No-Action)	Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)	Alternative C (New Facility at Existing Site)	Alternative D (Indianhead Flowage)	Alternative E (Heritage Coalition)	Alternative F (Polk County)
Utilities and Energy	Moderate, short-term and long-term adverse on electrical system in existing facility; minor, long-term adverse on energy efficiency	Moderate, long-term beneficial on electrical system safety and overall utility efficiency; minor, long-term beneficial from potential alternative energy sources	Moderate, long-term beneficial on utility service efficiency and reliability; moderate, long-term beneficial on energy efficiency and potential alternative energy sources	Moderate, short-term adverse from necessity of extending utilities to the site; moderate, long-term beneficial on energy efficiency and potential alternative energy sources	Moderate, short-term adverse from necessity of extending utilities to the site; moderate, long-term beneficial on energy efficiency and potential alternative energy sources	Moderate, long-term beneficial on electrical system safety and overall utility efficiency; minor, long-term beneficial from potential alternative energy sources
Transportation	Negligible	Minor, long-term beneficial from improved signage; moderate, long-term beneficial from proximity to river and possible future trail	Minor, long-term adverse on local traffic circulation patterns (if Hamilton St. cul-de-sac); moderate, long-term beneficial on pedestrian safety (if Hamilton St. cul-de-sac); moderate, long-term beneficial from proximity to river and possible future trail	Minor, long-term adverse on residential neighborhood traffic; moderate, long-term beneficial on connectivity with recreational boating traffic and regional trail system	Moderate, long-term adverse on traffic safety; moderate, long-term adverse on river accessibility	Minor, long-term beneficial on traffic and parking at the headquarters site; minor to moderate, long-term adverse on traffic and parking congestion near the Polk County Information Center
Park Operations	Moderate, short-term and long-term adverse on operational efficiency	Moderate, short-term adverse from temporary staff relocation; moderate, long-term beneficial on operational efficiency	Moderate, short-term and long-term beneficial on operational efficiency	Moderate, short-term and long-term beneficial on operational efficiency	Moderate, long-term beneficial on operational efficiency	Moderate, short-term adverse from temporary staff relocation; moderate, long-term beneficial on headquarters operations; moderate, long-term adverse on NPS visitor education and services

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4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Topics addressed in this section and subsequently analyzed in Section 5.0 (Environmental Consequences) were selected based on their relevance as indicated by on-site visits, secondary source documents, regulatory agency input, and information from Riverway personnel. A brief rationale for selecting as well as dismissing topics from consideration is given below.

4.1 Impact Topics Selected for Analysis

4.1.1 Geology and Soils

The geology/hydrogeology and soils have a direct bearing on siting new facilities. The glacially derived soils in the region vary greatly in depth to groundwater, drainage capacities, erosion potential, and bearing strength. Groundwater problems, drainage, and load-bearing strength are all problems that have led to structural deterioration at the current Riverway Headquarters facility. Soils at potential sites for new facilities vary from gravelly fill materials to natural hydric (wetland) soils. Although soil conditions and hydrology adverse to development and construction at most sites can be overcome through engineering modifications, the NPS commitment to “building lightly on the land” must be taken into account in evaluating the suitability of geology/hydrology and soils at any possible construction location.

4.1.2 Surface Water Quality

The excellent water quality and free-flowing nature of much of the St. Croix River, which gives rise to high levels of aquatic biodiversity, are key factors in protecting the river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. All action alternatives are in relatively close proximity to the river and involve soil disturbance during construction, a potential increase in impervious surface area, and potential increases in non-point-source pollution. Best management practices to control erosion during and after construction along with design considerations that minimize changes in storm water runoff quantity and quality would be needed at any site selected for new construction. In addition, facility requirements also include the need for limited wet lab space used for water quality testing and space for additional staff needed to monitor and protect the Riverway.

4.1.3 Wetlands

All of the potential action alternatives except renovation of the existing facility could involve wetlands issues since eventual demolition of the existing facility would provide the opportunity to possibly construct a wetland area serving as a demonstration/educational resources and/or as a wetland mitigation site. Potential direct impacts on existing natural wetlands would be possible at the Indianhead Flowage site, while potential indirect impacts on artificial wetlands (e.g., the trout pond and channelized stream) are possible at the Existing Riverway Headquarters site.

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4.1.4 Ecological Resources (Vegetation and Wildlife)

The possible action alternatives involve highly different locations and ecological resources ranging from the old field/grassland/prairie conditions at the Heritage Coalition site to wooded Indianhead Flowage site with its hummocky wetland areas associated with perennial streams. There is also a small amount of woodland along the northern portion of the existing Riverway Headquarters site that could be impacted by development. Even in this limited area, there are apparently some specimens of state-rare plant species. Additionally, site restoration potential is present with all of the action alternatives with the exception of the renovation alternative (Alternative B).

4.1.5 Solid and Hazardous Wastes

All action alternatives involve solid waste/construction waste generation. All action alternatives except renovation (Alternative B) also involve eventual demolition of the existing Riverway Headquarters. Building deconstruction and the reuse of existing materials within the current facility is a possibility. Additionally, incorporation of “green building” materials composed of recycled products and the use of highly durable and recyclable materials such as certain types of carpeting, etc. is a possibility in renovation or new construction. There is a potential for encountering hazardous waste materials contaminating subsurface soils at the site of the former Ray’s Garage at the Indianhead Flowage site.

4.1.6 Visitor Experience and Aesthetic Resources

All alternatives would directly impact visitor experience and use. The location of the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility is obviously important to visitors finding the site. Once at the site, the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility should be accessible to all and should provide a quality, interactive program aimed at educating visitors about the Riverway and the proper use of it. The setting around the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility also determines what kind of experiential outdoor activities can be made available for more in-depth educational programs for school groups and special tours. The setting also helps determine the siting of the building and the architectural approach to creating a structure that “fits” its environment.

4.1.7 Socioeconomic Factors

The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a major regional resource that attracts visitors from throughout the country and especially from the Upper Midwest. Tourist/visitor dollars are very important to the local economies of both St. Croix Falls, WI, and Taylors Falls, MN. The river contributes additionally to the economy as an important area fishery. The Riverway Headquarters, located in St. Croix Falls, is an important local economic component. The present headquarters location is also an important component of downtown St. Croix Falls with a close relationship to downtown businesses.

4.1.8 Utilities and Energy

All action alternatives would involve some changes and improvements to existing utilities infrastructure. There would also be the opportunity to improve energy efficiency in the operation of the Riverway Headquarters physical plant.

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4.1.9 Transportation

Depending on the site and the alternative transportation-related changes, improvements could include, but not be limited to, roadways and parking areas, and trails.

4.1.10 Riverway Operations

All alternatives would impact the efficiency of Riverway operations from the standpoint of facility functioning, space utilization, administrative work area layout, storage, maintenance, etc.

4.2 Impact Topics Eliminated from Further Consideration

4.2.1 Floodplains

The existing Riverway Headquarters site and the Polk County Information Center are not within an identified 100-year or 500-year floodplain as defined by Flood Insurance Rate Maps (Department of Housing and Urban Development, Flood Hazard Boundary Map H -01-02, City of St. Croix Falls, WI, 5/24/74) and described in Executive Order 11988. The current Riverway Headquarters facility located immediately adjacent to the river was not flooded during the spring floods of 2001, which exceeded the hundred-year flood volume. The Indianhead Flowage site is outside the 100-year floodplain, but within the 500-year floodplain (Federal Emergency Management Agency, Community Panel 550577 0160B, Effective Date 6/4/90). However, this site also did not flood during the spring floods of 2001. The Heritage Coalition site at an elevation of 890 to 900 feet above mean sea level is approximately 150 feet above the normal pool of the St. Croix River at Taylors Falls, MN, and is obviously not in a 100-year or 500-year floodplain.

4.2.2 Prime and Unique Farmlands

None of the potential sites being evaluated are in agricultural production or have a history of being under cultivation. The Natural Resources Conservation Service does not consider soils present at the various alternative sites prime or unique farmlands.

4.2.3 Air Quality

The St. Croix Falls Wisconsin area is in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Northern Air Quality Region. The area is in attainment for all criteria pollutants. Some limited air emissions and fugitive dust would be generated from construction activities associated with any of the action alternatives. Additionally, some emissions would be generated by long-term routine operations of any NPS headquarters and St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility. However, given the high air quality in the region, these emissions would be negligible, locally and regionally. No general conformity analysis would be required to comply with provisions of the Clean Air Act.

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4.2.4 Noise

Except for temporary construction noise, none of the possible alternatives would generate significant noise. Vehicular traffic would be the primary contributing factor to noise near the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility, and this would be negligible by comparison to ambient levels from existing traffic. There are no unusually sensitive noise receptors associated with any of the alternatives. Lion's Park adjacent to the Indianhead Flowage site is a seasonally busy urban-like park with a motorized boat launch, picnic areas, and a children's play area. Activities in this park would likely generate higher ambient noise levels than would adjacent NPS facilities should they be sited in the vicinity.

4.2.5 Cultural Resources

All sites except for some areas of the Indianhead Flowage site have been highly disturbed by past and/or present human activity. However, this does not preclude the possible occurrence of archaeological sites being present. No final siting would be done at any location until Section 106 consultation under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act is completed, which, at a minimum, would include a Phase I archaeological survey.

4.3 Geology, Hydrology, and Soils

Bedrock within the St. Croix Falls and Taylors Falls region consists of volcanic (basalt) and sedimentary (sandstone and limestone) rock associated with the Midcontinental Rift System and dating back approximately 1.1 billion years (NPS, 1997). Cambrian sandstones and shales (570 to 500 million years old) then covered these more ancient formations. Repeated glaciation has covered most bedrock formations in the area with several hundred feet of till and outwash material. However, geologic erosion caused largely by glacial meltwaters within the St. Croix River valley re-exposed and eroded underlying bedrock resulting in formations such as the Dalles at Interstate Park (MNDNR, 2001). This bedrock formation is referred to as Keweenaw traprock (USDA, 1979). There is limited potential to develop sand and gravel extraction operations in the upper St. Croix River valley, and economic deposits of other minerals is highly unlikely (NPS, 1997). There are areas where relatively shallow glacial drift covers traprock, such as in portions of western Polk County in the vicinity of St. Croix Falls, WI.

Soils in the immediate vicinity of St. Croix Falls, WI, largely belong to the Rosholt-Cromwell-Menahga association (NPS, 1997). These are well-drained loamy and sandy soils formed in glacial outwash (USDA, 1979). Specific soils mapped in the vicinity of the existing Riverway Headquarters include Burkhardt sandy loam, 6-12 percent slopes, eroded; Dakota Variant silt loam, 0-3 percent slopes; and Fluvaquents, wet. Dominant soils of the Indianhead Flowage site include: Fluvaquents; Menahga loamy sand, 6-12 percent slopes; Menahga loamy sand, 12-25 percent slopes; Plover fine sandy loam, 0-3 percent slopes; and Barronett Variant fine sandy loam. Soil at the Polk County Visitor Center site was originally Udorthents, loamy. Soils at this site have been highly disturbed by roadway and other construction activities.

Several associations of sandy, glacial soils exist on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River in the vicinity of Taylors Falls, MN. Nymore-Lino and Mahtomedi-Pomroy soils occur on upland areas (USDA, 1995). These soils formed in glacial outwash and are excessively drained or somewhat poorly drained, sandy soils (USDA, 1979). Soil at the Heritage Coalition site is classified as Mahtomedi loamy sand, 1-6 percent slopes and Mahtomedi loamy sand, 20-35

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percent slopes. These soils are excessively drained and droughty. They are generally unsuitable for septic drain fields.

4.4 Surface Water Quality and Wetlands

Both Minnesota and Wisconsin have designated the majority of the Riverway as Outstanding Resource Waters using the most stringent discharge standards for new sources to the river (NPS, 2000). Water in the Riverway is characterized as a calcium bicarbonate type, which reflects the glacial drift through which groundwater flows (Graczyk, 1986 cited in NPS, 1997). The water has a moderate brown color caused by organic acids (tannic acid) and fine organic detritus originating from the many marshes and peat bogs within the river basin.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources have conducted a standard water quality monitoring program in the St. Croix River since 1975. There have been, historically, a few minor exceedances of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) water quality standards for copper, lead, fecal coliforms, and mercury at the USGS monitoring site at St. Croix Falls, WI (NPS, 1997).

The primary pollution threats to the Upper St. Croix River are from non-point sources outside of the Riverway. These sources include agricultural and other land-disturbing activities, and roadway runoff. Industrial point source pollution is minimal; however, there are discharges into the river from municipal wastewater treatment plants and from several cranberry farms (NPS, 1997).

About 40 to 45 percent of the land within the Riverway boundary in Minnesota is classified as wetlands. The three most common types of wetlands include: palustrine, broad-leaved deciduous forested, temporarily flooded, 1,229 acres; palustrine, deciduous scrub/scrub, saturated, 128 acres; and palustrine emergent, saturated, 95 acres. About 28 percent of the Upper Riverway in Wisconsin is classified as wetlands. The most common wetland types are palustrine wetlands that have wet soil, but rarely have surface water for prolonged periods. Palustrine wetlands characterized by deciduous trees such as black ash, elm, and silver maple cover about 4,600 acres. Deciduous shrub/shrub wetlands with willow, alder, and green ash cover about 1,400 acres. Wetlands with mixed deciduous and conifer tree coverage encompass approximately 1,300 acres (NPS, 1997).

There is a small spring-fed perennial stream just north of the existing parking lot at the current Riverway Headquarters site. There is also a small man-made spring-fed trout pond east of the current Riverway Headquarters building. This spring and pond feed a channelized drainage around the south side of the building to the St. Croix River. The clear, cold water in the pond supports a small population of native brook trout. Local roadways in the vicinity of the Riverway Headquarters as well as the paved parking areas around the headquarters building drain directly into the St. Croix River. There are possibly a few very small, undelineated wetland areas in the wooded portion at the north end of the Riverway Headquarters property.

Several small, unnamed perennial streams flow through the Indianhead Flowage site. Water quality in these streams has not been measured. However, they are spring-fed and visually appear to be of good quality. The NPS has data on water chemistry and macroinvertebrate communities for a number of similar spring-fed streams north of the Indianhead Flowage site. These streams are Sand Creek, False Big Creek, No Name #2, and Big Rock Creek. These are all high quality streams with a good diversity of macroinvertebrates given the small size and limited variety of habitats in these streams (NPS, 1998a).

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Several wetland areas are associated with the perennial streams at the Indianhead Flowage site. The wetlands at this site have not been jurisdictionally delineated. However, NPS personnel conducted a walkover of the site in November 2001 to roughly identify major wetland areas on the site. These areas are shown in Figure 7. Wetland 1 occupies a roughly circular area about 100 feet across approximately 100 feet northwest of the NPS maintenance garage. Wetland vegetation at this site consists of red-osier dogwood, speckled alder, sedge, and rush species. Wetland 2 is a more extensive wetland approximately 820 feet north of the maintenance building. This wetland essentially extends from west of SR 87 to the river. Sedges, ostrich and sensitive fern, red-osier dogwood and speckled alder characterized this site. Wetland 3 was approximately 160 feet east and south of the maintenance building. This wetland was roughly parallel to the river running south from the Indianhead trail but starting about 65 feet south of the trail.

The Indianhead Flowage site is generally vegetated and wooded up to the riverbank. There is minimal sheet flow directly into the river at this site. One primitive campsite is located adjacent to the river at the Indianhead Flowage site. The primitive toilet for this campsite is located approximately 100 feet from the river's edge.

As a highly developed site, there is no natural surface water at the Polk County Visitor Center site. Surface runoff from adjacent roadways and parking lots enters the storm drain system, which eventually carries storm water to the St. Croix River.

There are no streams or wetlands on the Heritage Coalition site in Taylors Falls. The gravelly, highly pervious soil conditions characterizing this site lead to rapid infiltration with minimal runoff.

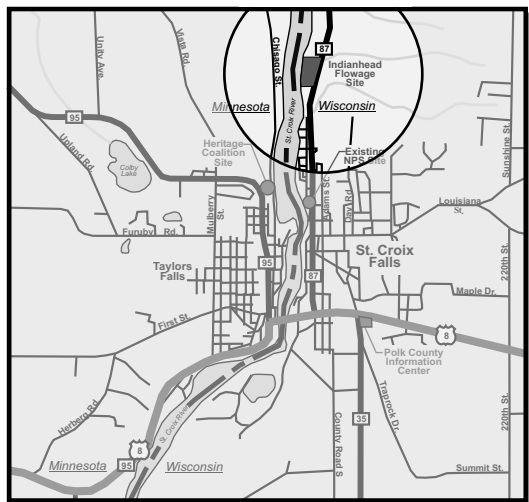
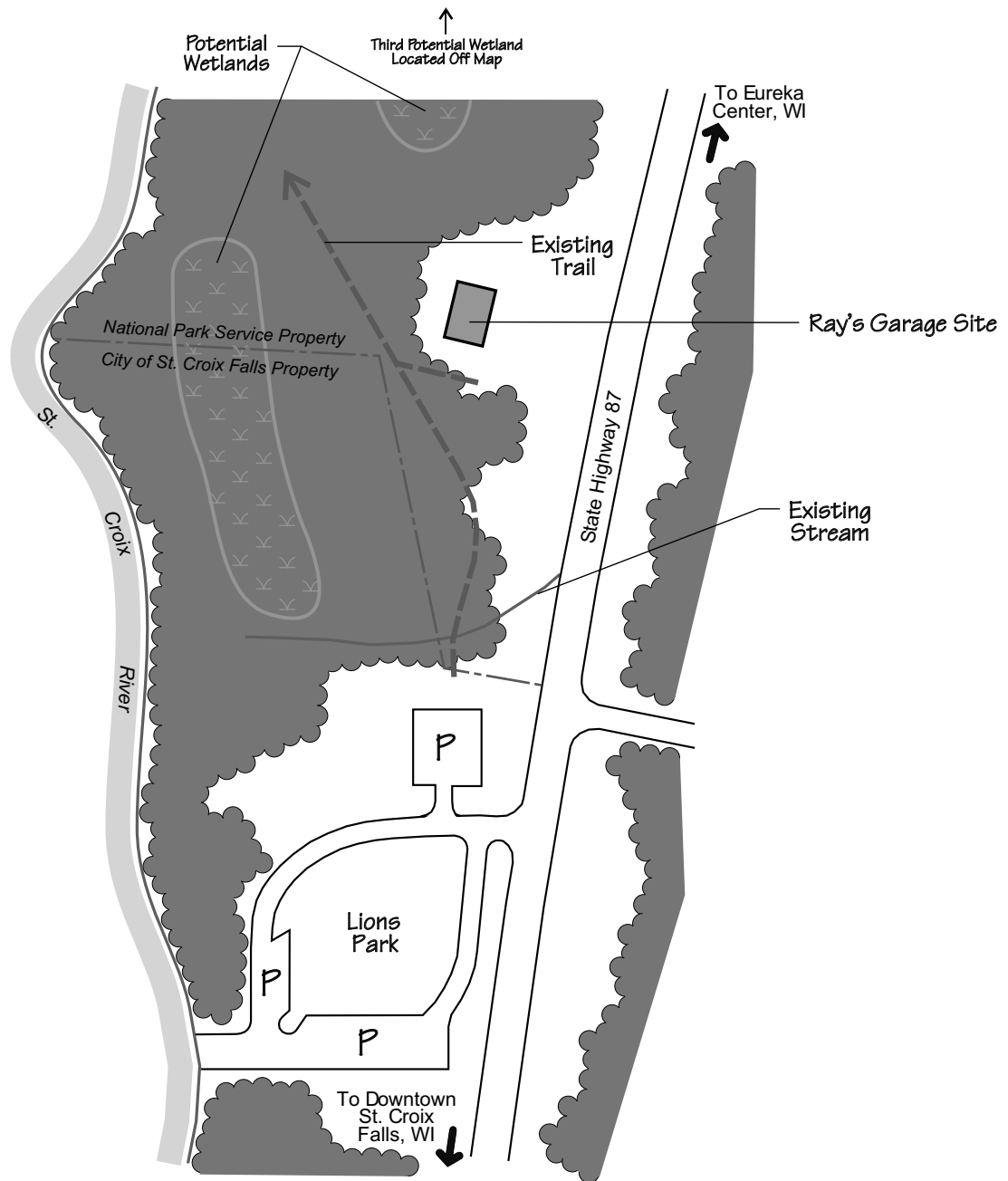
4.5 Ecological Resources (Vegetation)

4.5.1 General Aquatic Vegetation

The Upper St. Croix Riverway with its variety of habitats, soil types, and landforms supports a richly diverse plant community. In addition to the various types of wetland areas within the Riverway, there are various planktonic communities as well as submerged or floating aquatic vascular plant communities in lentic (standing water) and lotic (flowing water) areas. Common vascular plants in lotic communities include wild celery (*Vallisneria americana*) and pondweed (*Potamogeton* sp.). Common lentic community plants are coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), pondweed, duckweed (*Spirodela* spp.), water lilies (*Nymphaea* spp.), bur-reed (*Sparganium* spp.), and prairie cordgrass (*Spartina* spp.). Wild rice (*Zizania palustris*) occurs in some flowages (NPS, 1997).

4.5.2 General Terrestrial Vegetation

The northern hardwood forest community is common in Polk County, WI, and in Chisago County, MN. This terrestrial community occurs in dry to mesic (moist) areas protected from fire. Dominant trees include sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), basswood (*Tilia americana*), and yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) interspersed with white pine (*Pinus strobus*), balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), white spruce (*Picea glauca*), and white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*). The maple-



Not to Scale

Shown for relationships only. Exact size, configuration, and location on site are to be determined during the design process.

Figure 7
Potential Wetlands
Indianhead Flowage Site
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility
 St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

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basswood forest community is also found in the area with dominant trees including basswood, sugar maple, red oak (*Quercus rubra*), and green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*).

Aggressive exotic plants species within saturated wetland habitats include purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), while upland areas include invasives such as spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) (NPS, 1997).

4.5.3 Vegetation of the Existing Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility Site

4.5.3.1 Aquatic Vegetation

There is little natural habitat available for aquatic vegetation at the existing Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility Site. The existing trout pond, however, contains duckweed (*Lemna* sp.).

4.5.3.2 Terrestrial Vegetation

Given the developed nature of most of the existing Riverway Headquarters site, there is relatively little habitat for native terrestrial vegetation. The small wooded area along the northern property boundary contains specimens of false mermaid (*Floerkea proserpinacoides*)—a plant listed as threatened by Minnesota. Also, Judziewicz and Iltis (1994) located a small population of prairie fameflower (*Talinum rugospermum*) adjacent to the St. Croix Falls downtown overlook just south of the Riverway Headquarters. Tree species existing at the Riverway Headquarters site include paper birch, river birch, sugar maple, red pine, hackberry, weeping willow, bur oak, blue spruce, and basswood. Shrubs include common buckthorn, honeysuckle, and European mountain ash.

4.5.4 Vegetation of the Indianhead Flowage Site

4.5.4.1 Aquatic Vegetation

Plants associated with the scattered small wetlands at the Indianhead Flowage site include red-osier dogwood, speckled alder, ostrich and sensitive fern, sedges and rushes.

4.5.4.2 Terrestrial Vegetation

The Indianhead Flowage site is the most biologically diverse of all the potential sites for a new Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility. The site is dominated by a maple-basswood forest community crossed by several small spring-fed streams and contains wetland areas. NPS personnel have identified some of the dominant plants at the Indianhead Flowage site (Hebig, 2001). These plant species are listed in Table 2. NPS personnel identified additional dominant plant species at the Indianhead Flowage site during a wetland walkover in November 2001 (Maercklein, unpublished data). In addition to the species listed in Table 2, Maercklein identified bur oak, black cherry, American hornbeam, ironwood, gray dogwood, and maidenhair fern in the area. The invasive, exotic Tartarian honeysuckle and Siberian pea-shrub were also identified along with abundant buckthorn.

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Table 2
Some Dominant Plant Species Recorded at the Indianhead Flowage Site¹

Common Name	Family	Scientific Name
Basswood	Tiliaceae	<i>Tilia americana</i>
Black Ash	Oleaceae	<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>
Black Raspberry	Rosaceae	<i>Rubus occidentalis</i>
Bouncing Bet	Caryophyllaceae	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>
Buckthorn	Rhamnaceae	<i>Rhamnus</i> sp.
Canada Moonseed	Menispermaceae	<i>Menispermum canadense</i>
Common Fleabane	Asteraceae	<i>Erigeron philadelphicus</i>
Creeping Charlie	Lamiaceae	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Curly Dock	Polygonaceae	<i>Rumex crispus</i>
Fringed Loosestrife	Primulaceae	<i>Lysimachia ciliata</i>
Green Ash	Oleaceae	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>
Hoary Alyssum	Cruciferae	<i>Berteroa incana</i>
Late Goldenrod	Asteraceae	<i>Solidago gigantea</i>
Old Field Goldenrod	Asteraceae	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>
Pointed-Leaved Tick Trefoil	Fabaceae	<i>Desmodium glutinosum</i>
Quaking Aspen	Salicaceae	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>
Red Baneberry	Ranunculaceae	<i>Actaea rubra</i>
Red Raspberry	Rosaceae	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>
Reed Canary Grass	Poaceae	<i>Phalaris arundinaceae</i>
Rough Bedstraw	Rubiaceae	<i>Galium asprellum</i>
Rough Hedge Nettle	Laminaceae	<i>Stachys tenuifolia</i> var. <i>hispida</i>
Sandbar Willow	Salicaceae	<i>Salix interior</i>
Silky Dogwood	Cornaceae	<i>Cornus amomum</i>
Silvery Cinquefoil	Rosaceae	<i>Potentilla argentea</i>
Slippery Elm	Ulmaceae	<i>Ulmus rubra</i>
Staghorn Sumac	Anacardiaceae	<i>Rhus typhina</i>
Sugar Maple	Aceraceae	<i>Acer saccharum</i>
Virginia Creeper	Vitaceae	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>
Western Wheat Grass	Poaceae	<i>Agropogon smithii</i>
White Oak	Fagaceae	<i>Quercus alba</i>
Wild Black Current	Saxifragaceae	<i>Ribes americanum</i>
Wild Geranium	Geraniaceae	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>
Yarrow	Asteraceae	<i>Achillea millefolim</i>
Yellow Goats-Beard	Asteraceae	<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>
¹ Reported by Hebig, 2001.		

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Populations of several rare state-listed or special concern plants were located or mentioned as historically occurring in the vicinity of the Indianhead Flowage site by Judziewicz and Iltis (1994). These plant species included:

- Dragon sagewort (*Artemisia dracunculus*) with historic populations along River Road approximately 5 miles north of St. Croix Falls.
- Assiniboine sedge (*Carex assiniboinensis*) in the white oak-elm-sugar maple woodlands along Indianhead hiking trail 0.75 mile north of the St. Croix Falls Lion's Park.
- False mermaid (*Floerkea proserpinacoides*) under sugar maples near the mouth of Big Rock Creek about one mile north of St. Croix Falls.
- Prairie fameflower (*Talinum rugospermum*) at scattered basalt barrens in and around St. Croix Falls including just southeast of Lion's Park.

4.5.5 Vegetation of the Heritage Coalition Site

4.5.5.1 Aquatic Vegetation

There is no natural habitat available for aquatic vegetation at the Heritage Coalition Site.

4.5.5.2 Terrestrial Vegetation

Native vegetation at the Heritage Coalition site has been heavily disturbed since the site was formerly used as a source for gravel and fill in the construction of State Route 95. Most of the site is covered with a mix of introduced grasses and forbs. There are reportedly some scattered remnants of native prairie plant species. There is no surface water on the site. The steep bluff slopes along the eastern edge of the site are covered with scrubby second or third-growth hardwood trees and shrubs. A considerable number of small white oaks were noted along the top of the bluff. The MnDOT maintenance storage site adjacent to the north end of the Heritage Coalition site is highly disturbed and largely devoid of vegetation. A privately owned red pine plantation is adjacent to the north end of the site and the MnDOT site. There have been no known plant surveys of this site.

4.5.6 Vegetation of the Polk County Information Center Site

4.5.6.1 Aquatic Vegetation

There is no natural habitat available for aquatic vegetation at the Polk County Information Center Site.

4.5.6.2 Terrestrial Vegetation

The Polk County Visitors Center site is a highly developed area with lawn areas surrounding paved parking lots and roadways. There are no undisturbed ecological areas in the immediate vicinity of the Visitors Center for native vegetation.

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4.6 Ecological Resources (Wildlife)

4.6.1 General Aquatic Wildlife

Aquatic habitats in this part of the Riverway have a rich diversity of both vertebrate and invertebrate animal species. Fago and Hatch (1993 reported in NPS, 1997) found specimen records for 218 aquatic invertebrate species in the Upper St. Croix basin. One dragonfly species, the St. Croix snaketail (*Ophiogomphus susbehcha*) is a special interest species first described from the St. Croix in 1989. The diversity of unionid mussels in the Riverway is unparalleled in the upper Midwest with up to 40 mussel species present in the river (20+ species known from above Taylors Falls). The federally endangered Higgins' Eye pearly mussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*) is found in the Lower Riverway. The winged mapleleaf mussel (*Quadrula fragosa*) is only found in the Lower Riverway and nowhere else in the world (Doolittle cited in NPS, 2000). Mussel populations are threatened by the exotic zebra mussel, by non-point source water pollution, and by long-term changes in fish populations resulting from dams along the river. Sixty-five to seventy species of fish are known from the Upper Riverway. Common fish species include smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), walleye pike (*Stizostedion vetreum*), northern pike (*Esox lucius*), muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*), catfish (*Ictalurus* spp.), blue-gill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), rock bass (*Ambloplites rupestris*), and a variety of redhorse suckers (*Moxostoma* spp.) and minnows. Fish introduced into this part of the Riverway include carp, rainbow trout, brown trout, sheephead, and black-sided darter. Brook trout are the only native trout to the Upper Riverway (NPS, 1997).

Eighteen species of amphibians and 14 species of reptiles have been reported from the Upper Riverway, many of which inhabit both aquatic and terrestrial habitats (NPS, 1997). The Blandings turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) (proposed for federal listing) and wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpta*) inhabit the Upper Riverway where they utilize floodplain forests, shallow sloughs, and sandy areas for foraging and nesting. Common aquatic herptiles in the Upper Riverway include: snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*), eastern spiny softshell turtle (*Trionyx spiniferus*), painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*), green frog (*Rana clamitans*), and numerous others (NPS, 1997).

The Riverway is considered very productive for aquatic birds such as wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*) and mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*). A small population of rare trumpeter (*Cygnus buccinator*) swans over-winters north of the St Croix Falls area. Nesting pairs have been observed during the breeding season and the fall migration (NPS, 1997).

Although there is not a lot of baseline information available concerning mammals inhabiting the Upper Riverway, there are records of at least 60 aquatic and terrestrial species occurring in the Upper Riverway (NPS, 1997). A few of the larger aquatic mammalian species common along the Upper Riverway include: otter (*Lutra canadensis*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*), and beaver (*Castor canadensis*).

4.6.2 General Terrestrial Wildlife

Common terrestrial herptiles in the Upper Riverway include: eastern garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), smooth green snake (*Ophreodrys vernalis*), hog-nosed snake (*Heterodon platyrhinos*), red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*), American toad (*Bufo americanus*), eastern garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), smooth green snake (*Ophreodrys vernalis*), hog-nosed snake (*Heterodon platyrhinos*), red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*), American toad (*Bufo*

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americanus), spring peepers (*Hyla crucifer*), spring peepers (*Hyla crucifer*), and many others (NPS, 1997).

More than 200 species of birds (aquatic and terrestrial) have been reported from the Upper Riverway with approximately 157 bird species nesting within the Riverway (Maercklein, 1999). Five raptor species, including the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) frequent the Upper Riverway. Wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) have been re-introduced in Polk County, Wisconsin.

A few of the larger mammalian species common along the Upper Riverway include: white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), mink (*Mustela vison*), weasel (*Mustela* sp.), skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), woodchuck (*Marmota monax*), and raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). Numerous smaller mammals such as gray and red squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis* and *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), etc. are also abundant.

The gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and the bald eagle are the only endangered species (animal or plant) known to permanently inhabit the upper reaches of the St. Croix (NPS, 1997). Eight or nine wolf packs use the Riverway area generally northward from St. Croix State Park. In 1995, there were 19 active bald eagle nests north of Taylors Falls (NPS, 1997).

4.6.3 Wildlife of the Existing Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility Site

4.6.3.1 Aquatic Wildlife

Given the developed nature of most of the existing Riverway Headquarters site, there is relatively little habitat for native aquatic wildlife. The small man-made trout pond, which is spring-fed contains native brook trout.

4.6.3.2 Terrestrial Wildlife

Terrestrial vertebrate wildlife are essentially absent from the Riverway Headquarters site, which the possible exception of transient species of birds.

4.6.4 Wildlife of the Indianhead Flowage Site

4.6.4.1 Aquatic Wildlife

The Indianhead Flowage site is the most biologically diverse of all the potential sites for a new Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility. NPS personnel have conducted several frog and toad vocalization surveys during the spring and summer months of 1999 through 2001 (Table 3) (Maercklein, 2001). These species may be considered semi-aquatic as most use aquatic habitats strictly for breeding.

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Table 3
Frog and Toad Vocalization Survey Results from the Indianhead Flowage Site

Date	Common Name	Scientific Name
4/13/99	Spring Peeper	<i>Hyla crucifer</i>
4/13/99	Western Chorus Frog	<i>Pseudacris triseriata</i>
4/13/99	Wood Frog	<i>Rana sylvatica</i>
4/13/99	American Toad	<i>Bufo americanus</i>
4/13/99	Eastern Gray Treefrog	<i>Hyla versicolor/chrysoscelis</i>
6/28/99	None	
5/1/00	Spring Peeper	<i>Hyla crucifer</i>
5/22/00	American Toad	<i>Bufo americanus</i>
7/5/00	None	
4/19/01	Spring Peeper	<i>Hyla crucifer</i>
4/19/01	Wood Frog	<i>Rana sylvatica</i>
5/24/01	Spring Peeper	<i>Hyla crucifer</i>
6/27/01	None	

4.6.4.1 Terrestrial Wildlife

A few bird and bat species were also noted during the above-mentioned frog and toad surveys, as well as at several other times during 1999 through 2001. These additional species included: big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*), barred owl (*Strix varia*), broad-winged hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), gray catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), and Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*).

4.6.5 Wildlife of the Heritage Coalition Site

4.6.5.1 Aquatic Wildlife

There is no natural habitat available for aquatic wildlife at the Heritage Coalition Site.

4.6.5.2 Terrestrial Wildlife

The Heritage Coalition site has been heavily disturbed since the site was formerly used as a source for gravel and fill in the construction of State Route 95. Resident animals on this site would be largely restricted to terrestrial invertebrates, small mammals, and locally common songbird species. There have been no wildlife surveys of the site.

4.6.6 Wildlife of the Polk County Information Center Site

4.6.6.1 Aquatic Wildlife

There is no natural habitat available for aquatic wildlife at the Polk County Information Center Site.

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4.6.6.2 Terrestrial Wildlife

The Polk County Visitors Center site is a highly developed area with lawn areas surrounding paved parking lots and roadways. There are no undisturbed ecological areas in the immediate vicinity of the Visitors Center for terrestrial wildlife.

4.7 Solid and Hazardous Wastes

General solid and hazardous waste issues associated with any action alternative would or could possibly include the following:

- Disposal of solid wastes (and possibly special wastes such as asbestos-containing material, lead-based paint, etc.) generated during renovation, demolition, or deconstruction of the existing Riverway Headquarters building.
- Disposal of vegetation, asphalt, and other materials existing on potential new construction sites.
- Investigation of possible past soil/groundwater contamination at various alternative sites for a new facility.
- Use of processed, recycled construction materials with lower embodied energy in new facility construction.

The existing Riverway Headquarters building is an 11,228 square-foot two-story wooden structure constructed in the 1960s. A 600-sq. ft. loading and storage building is located across Hamilton Street from the headquarters building. There are approximately 27,500 sq. ft. of asphalt-paved parking and roadway surfaces on the site. Massachusetts Street dead ends to the south of the existing Riverway Headquarters building. The building has been surveyed for the presence of asbestos, and mitigation was done in pipe chases. However, some asbestos-containing material (ACM) remains in the building. There is no history of fuel storage tanks being used on the existing site. Approximately one acre of woodland occupies the northern edge of the property.

A 2,400 sq. foot metal maintenance building is located approximately 200 feet west of State Route 87 on the Indianhead Flowage site (Figure 4, Location 2). The facility is located on the site once occupied by Ray's Garage—a service station/auto repair facility. The garage closed in 1982, and the property was purchased by the NPS that same year. There has not been an Environmental Site Assessment of the property, and it is not known if any underground storage tanks remain on the site or if any historic contamination of soil and/or groundwater has occurred at this location since six tanks were reportedly removed in the early 1980s prior to enactment of current closure reporting regulations. There is also an abandoned homestead site at the north end of the Indianhead Flowage site. The house and other buildings were removed a number of years ago. An open area remains where the house once stood. Other than some gravel driveways and a small asphalt paved pull-off formerly serving the former Ray's Garage and now serving the NPS maintenance building, there are no improved road surfaces or parking areas at the Indianhead Flowage site. Most of the site is heavily wooded with the exception of areas immediately adjacent to SR 87, the NPS maintenance building, and the abandoned homestead.

The Polk County Visitors Center is approximately 1500 sq. ft. concrete and brick facility with approximately 9000 sq. ft. of asphalt paved parking and roadway surfaces adjacent to it. The Center was constructed in 1993.

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The Heritage Coalition site has an approximately 600 foot-long paved, two-lane road leading from SR 95 to a parking area near an overlook. There are cement sidewalks at the overlook and leading from the overlook parking area to a small (400 sq. ft.) open-sided pavilion that could be used for picnicking. The remainder of the 11-acre site is free of structures and pavements.

4.8 Visitor Experience and Aesthetic Resources

Visitors utilize the Riverway for year-round recreational pursuits. Watercraft ranging from canoes to motorboats ply the waterway during the summer months. There are 43 canoe landings and boat launches along the waterway to provide access for these recreational pursuits. Visitors also choose land-based outdoor recreation for both summer and winter experiences.

Snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking and wildlife watching are just a few activities visitors participate in during their visit to the Riverway. The Riverway is divided into three administrative districts—Namekagon District including the St. Croix from Gordon to Riverside, WI, and all of the Namekagon River; Marshland District from Riverside, WI, to Nevers Dam; and Lower District from Nevers Dam to Prescott, WI, at the confluence of the St. Croix with the Mississippi.

The number of visitors varies by district and distance from the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. The annual visitation for the entire Riverway has fluctuated over the past 20 years. In 1982, there were a total of 445,183 recreation visits. By 2001, the number of recreation visits decreased to 257,903 total visitors to the Riverway. These estimates include visits to visitor centers, Osceola Landing, NPS trails, Earl Park and a number of individual recreational visits such as anglers, skiers, and hikers. They do not include use of state parks or other parks within the boundary of the Riverway. More recent statistics on visitation for the Riverway are summarized in Tables 4 and 5. As can be seen there has been a general decline in the recorded number of visitors to the Riverway and specifically to the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility over the past decade.

Table 4
Riverway Recreational Visits 1996-2001

Year	Number of Visits
1996	422,653
1997	427,093
1998	443,640
1999	328,506
2000	26,108 ¹
2001	257,903
¹ 100-year flood event.	
Source: NPS, 2002.	

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Table 5
St. Croix Falls Visitor Center Visitation 1991-2001

Year	Number of Visits
1991	17,468
1992	18,902
1993	16,723
1994	14,136
1995	15,122
1996	15,063
1997	14,230
1998	13,421
1999	12,108
2000	11,451
2001	9,361
Source: NPS, 2002	

According to the General Management Plan (GMP) the area of the Riverway between St. Croix Falls and Taylors Falls northward to River Mile 55 is classified as Urban Recreation. Buildings, structures, and other signs of people dominate this area although natural features (especially the river) continue to be important (NPS, 1997). The area lends itself most to social group experiences with relatively little opportunity for solitude. Noise levels from roadways, motorcraft, and people may be relatively high.

4.9 Socioeconomics

The current Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility is located in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin within Polk County about 50 miles northeast of Minneapolis. St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin population in 2000 was about 2,030 people or an increase of 19.3 percent from 1990. The Polk County population in 2000 was almost 41,320 people with an increase of 15.8 percent from 1990. Taylors Falls, Minnesota population in 2000 was about 950 people with a large increase of 27.0 percent from 1990. For Chisago County, Minnesota the population in 2000 was 41,100 for an increase of 25.7 percent from 1990.

In 1999, Polk County had the lowest per capita income of all Wisconsin counties at \$22,411 compared to the statewide Wisconsin average of \$27,370. Per capital income in Chisago County, MN, was \$25,693, compared to the State of Minnesota with \$30,742, and the United States at \$28,546 (US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis). In 1990 the largest industry employer for St. Croix Falls was retail trade consisting of 18.1 percent of jobs followed by health services at 16.6 percent and manufacturing of durable goods with 13.0 percent. For Polk County the largest industry employers were manufacturing of durable goods at 16.9 percent with retail trade second at 14.7 percent and manufacturing of non-durable goods at 9.4 percent. Taylors Falls largest employer was retail trade at 16.4 percent followed by other professional and related services with 13.0 percent and then health services at 12.1 percent.

In Chisago County retail trade was the largest employer at 15.5 percent with manufacturing of durable goods next at 14.2 percent followed by health services at 9.4 percent. In all four jurisdictions retail is among the top three industry employers, which shows the importance of tourism to the area. The unemployment rate for Polk County has dropped since 1990 when it

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was 6.0 percent to 3.7 percent in 2000. For Chisago County the unemployment rate has also gone down from 7.1 percent in 1990 to 4.0 percent for 2000. Unemployment rates in both of these counties are still higher than in their respective states with Wisconsin's unemployment rate at 3.5 percent and Minnesota's at 3.3 percent (US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002).

Housing in the area seems fairly stable with the exception of Polk County, Wisconsin, which has the highest vacancy rate of 23.1 percent in 2000. This can be attributed to the high percentage of total housing, 19.9 percent, which is used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin's vacancy rate is much lower at 5.8 percent with only 1.5 percent of total housing that is used for seasonal purposes. In Taylors Falls, Minnesota the vacancy rate was also low at 4.4 percent with 2.3 percent of all housing for seasonal use. And for Chisago County the vacancy rate 6.9 percent with 4.4 percent of total housing for seasonal purposes. Owner occupied housing was highest in Chisago County at 87.1 percent followed by Polk County with 80.2 percent, Taylors Falls at 76.4 percent, and St. Croix Falls with 62.5 percent. Except for St. Croix Falls, this is much higher than the Nation at 66.2 percent, Wisconsin at 68.4 percent, and Minnesota at 74.6 percent.

4.10 Utilities and Energy

Major utility providers in the area of St. Croix Falls, WI, and Taylors Falls, MN, are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Utility Providers

Utility	St. Croix Falls	Taylors Falls
Electric	Xcel Energy	Xcel Energy
Gas	Wisconsin Gas	Xcel Energy
Water	City of St. Croix Falls	City of Taylors Falls
Sewer	City of St. Croix Falls	City of Taylors Falls
Telephone	CenturyTel	Qwest
Cable	Charter Communications	US Cable

Being within the corporation limits of the City of St. Croix Falls, WI, the current Riverway Headquarters site is fully serviced by local/regional utilities. There is a utility easement along Hamilton Street that divides the headquarters site into an "upper" area east of the street and the "lower" area west of the street. Overhead power lines are located along Hamilton Street. There are no supplemental utility systems installed in the current facility to provide on-site active or passive solar power, wastewater treatment, etc.

The electrical system within the existing headquarters building is inadequate for the load—a situation, which has resulted in periodic outages. Moisture/water problems in the building have led to high mold counts and created an on-going electrical hazard for staff and visitors alike.

The Indianhead Flowage site lies immediately north of the St. Croix Falls, WI, corporation limits. As a result, there are no water or sewer connections to the site. However, these utilities are available at Lion's Park adjacent to the southern border of the Indianhead Flowage site. Electrical and telephone lines are located along the SR 87 right-of-way paralleling the east side of the Indianhead Flowage site.

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The Heritage Coalition site is within the Taylors Falls, MN, corporation limits. However, the closest utilities are on the west side of SR 95.

The Polk County Visitors Center site is within the St. Croix Falls, WI, corporation limits and, as a result, is fully serviced by utilities.

4.11 Transportation

The existing Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility main entry is accessed from Massachusetts Street one block east off of SR 87. SR 87 is the primary north-south highway through St. Croix Falls, WI. The eastern portion of the Headquarters site, which consists of a loading area, parking lot, and storage facility, is located in the northeast corner of the intersection of Massachusetts Street and Hamilton Street. Massachusetts Street dead-ends into the St. Croix River south of the Headquarters building. The main Headquarters facility is located west of Hamilton Street (between Hamilton Street and the river). Staff and visitor parking is located north of the Headquarters facility with a seasonal canoe launch at the west end of the parking area. All streets and parking areas in the vicinity of the Riverway Headquarters are paved with asphalt. There are currently no trail connections to the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility site.

The Indianhead Flowage site is located approximately one mile north of the current Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility. The SR 87 right-of-way defines the eastern boundary of the Indianhead Flowage site. A paved pull-off from the roadway provides access to the NPS maintenance building (the old Ray's Garage site). There is also a short driveway from SR 87 to the abandoned homestead site at the north end of the Indianhead Flowage site. There are no other roads or parking areas at the Indianhead Flowage site. The unpaved Indianhead Flowage trail traverses the entire site from southeast to northwest. This trail is a span of the Ice Age National Trail.

Highway access to the Polk County Information Center site is by Highway 35 and US 8. Paved and lighted parking is adjacent to the Information Center. The Gandy Dancer trail traverses the site. This 98 mile-long trail follows an abandoned rail line from St. Croix Falls, WI, to Superior, WI. The trail is paved with crushed limestone from St. Croix Falls north to Danbury, WI, and this segment is suitable for hiking and bike touring. The segment of trail north of Danbury through eastern Minnesota to Superior is unpaved and accessible for hiking or mountain biking. The entire trail is reserved for ATV and snowmobile use from December through March.

The Heritage Coalition site in north Taylors Falls, MN, is accessed via SR 95. SR 95 a paved two-lane north-south roadway, which is heavily traveled during the summer months. There are no hiking or biking trail connections to the Heritage Coalition site.

4.12 Riverway Operations

Twenty-one full-time and four seasonal staff (staff that are employed by NPS during only a portion of the year) have offices in the Headquarters facility. The Headquarters houses management and support staff, and operational staff for the Lower District. Because the existing facility was built as a motel/restaurant, interior space is not configured for efficient office use. Staff, equipment, exhibits, stored artifacts etc. are crowded into inadequate space. Recent documented problems with indoor air quality associated with high mold counts have resulted in further staff crowding with the relocation of two offices from the lower level of the building to

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the upper levels of the building due to health concerns. This staff move has necessitated rerouting visitors through the Headquarters reception area. The public restrooms on the lower level adjacent to the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility receive water damage each time it rains, creating a safety hazard, and they may need to be closed as a result of high airborne mold levels.

Accessibility for some staff can also be a problem within the three levels of the Headquarters facility since there is no elevator system. A physically challenged NPS staff member recently turned down a position at the Riverway because of accessibility problems.

Storage space for office supplies within the Headquarters facility is extremely limited resulting in temporary storage in hallways. Truck access to the storage building located north of Hamilton Street is difficult because of the tight turning spaces available.

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5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section of the EA forms the scientific and analytic basis for the comparisons of alternatives as required by 40 CFR 1502.14. This discussion of impacts (effects) is organized in parallel with Section 4.0 (Affected Environment) and is organized by resource area. The No-Action Alternative and each action alternative are discussed within each resource area. To the extent possible, the direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, beneficial, and adverse impacts of each alternative are described for each resource area. Cumulative impacts are discussed in the context of the definition given in 40 CFR 1508.7.

Impairment Analysis—The *National Park Service Management Policies* (NPS, 2001) requires analysis of potential effects to determine whether or not actions would impair Riverway resources or values.

The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to conserve Riverway resources and values and to prevent impairment of those resources; and, the Riverway's enabling legislation, as amended, further mandates resource protection. National Park Service managers must always seek ways to avoid, or to minimize to the greatest degree practicable, actions that would adversely affect Riverway resources and values (NPS Management Policies, 2001, Section 1.4 Park Management).

These laws give the National Park Service the management discretion to allow impacts to Riverway resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of a Riverway, so long as the impact does not constitute impairment of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within National Park Service units, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the National Park Service must leave Riverway resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise.

The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible National Park Service manager, would harm the integrity of Riverway resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. An impact to any Riverway resource or value may constitute an impairment. Impairment may result from National Park Service activities in managing the Riverway, from visitor activities, or from activities undertaken by concessionaires, contractors, and others operating in the Riverway. Impairment of Riverway resources can also occur from activities occurring outside Riverway boundaries. An impact would be more likely to constitute an impairment to the extent that it has a major or severe adverse effect upon a resource or value whose conservation is:

- Necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the Riverway;
- Key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Riverway or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Riverway; or
- Identified as a goal in the Riverway's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

Cumulative Impacts: The CEQ regulations, which implement NEPA, require assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision-making process for federal projects. Cumulative impacts are defined as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of

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what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” (40 CFR 1508.7).

Cumulative impacts are considered for both the no-action and proposed action alternatives. Cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of action alternatives with potential other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Therefore, it was necessary to identify other ongoing or foreseeable future projects within St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and, if necessary, the surrounding region. Other actions and plans that were considered during the analysis of cumulative impacts were presented in Section 2.2, Relationship to Other Actions and Plans.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact—Evaluation of alternatives takes into account whether the impacts would be negligible, minor, moderate, or major; with minor being barely detectable, moderate being clearly detectable, and major being a substantial alteration of current conditions. Duration of impacts are evaluated based on the short-term or long-term nature of alternative-associated changes on existing conditions. Type of impact refers to the beneficial or adverse consequences of implementing a given alternative. More exact interpretations of intensity, duration, and type of impact are given for each resource area examined. However, since the design of any new Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility has not been completed, analysis is largely qualitative. Professional judgement is used to reach reasonable conclusions as to the intensity and duration of potential impacts.

5.1 Impacts on Geology, Hydrology, and Soils

5.1.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focused on the effects and interaction of existing soil conditions at the alternative sites on constructability in terms of dealing with issues of groundwater depth, drainage, erosion potential, and load-bearing strength. Soil and subsurface geologic conditions that increase the need for engineering solutions to insure structural stability generally do not contribute to the NPS goal of “building lightly on the land.” Likewise, placement of structures in areas marginally suitable for construction creates a greater possibility that natural processes such as groundwater recharge and groundwater movement would be locally disrupted and that groundwater contamination could occur.

Basis of Analysis—

Drainage Capacities and Depth to Groundwater—The impact analysis is discussed in terms of native soil capacities to absorb runoff, their suitability for construction of storm water control devices, and their permeability impacting potential groundwater contamination. Depth to groundwater is also discussed in general terms regarding potential impact on construction, the need to employ more extensive foundation drainage systems, and/or use of additional fill materials.

Erosion Potential—Impacts of construction activities as well as subsequent operations of facilities associated with the alternatives are discussed based on the soil types present.

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Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—No change in drainage capacity or moisture absorbency of existing soils, no erosion potential during or after construction, and no potential changes to groundwater quality or flow.
- **Minor**—Very limited soil disturbance (under five acres) having some possible short-term and localized effects related to increased erosion potential but no long-term changes in soil drainage capacity, moisture absorbency, or groundwater resources.
- **Moderate**—Disturbance of five acres or more of soil requiring an erosion control plan with mitigation, measurable long-term changes in soil drainage and moisture absorbency characteristics, and possible small-scale indirect impacts on groundwater resources
- **Major**—Disturbance of five acres or more of soil requiring an erosion control plan with mitigation, measurable long-term changes in soil drainage and moisture absorbency characteristics, and direct or indirect impacts on local groundwater flow and/or quality.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Lasting only during the construction period or no longer than two years.
 - **Long-Term**—Essentially a permanent post-construction impact.

5.1.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—The No-Action Alternative would leave the existing Riverway Headquarters site unchanged in terms of ground surface or subsurface disturbance. The existing high water table with resultant impacts on the foundation of the existing structure would continue. There would be a continuation of stopgap efforts to divert ground and surface water away from the Headquarters building resulting in impacts that would be short- and long-term and negligible. Erosion would not be of concern since existing vegetative cover and impervious surfaces would remain unchanged.

Cumulative Impacts—The No-Action Alternative would result in no foreseeable future construction beyond minimal stopgap efforts to maintain the existing building. There is no NPS construction associated with this alternative, or other NPS actions or plans in the immediate vicinity. Reasonably foreseeable future actions by the local community such as construction of a river trail and development of a neighboring site would result in minor, short-term adverse impacts to geology and soils in the vicinity of the Riverway Headquarters site.

Conclusion—The No-Action Alternative would have negligible short-term and long-term impacts on geology, hydrology, and soils at the existing Riverway Headquarters site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's soil or geologic resources or values from Alternative A.

5.1.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Activities associated with Alternative B would be primarily confined to existing indoor spaces at the Riverway Headquarters site. Although this alternative might entail excavating around the exterior east wall to eliminate moisture and mold problems and the use of more extensive engineering approaches in diverting groundwater away from the existing structure, the general approach and impacts would be much the same as that for the No-Action Alternative, which would be negligible in both the short- and long-term.

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Cumulative Impacts—This alternative would result in minimal stopgap efforts to maintain the existing building through minor excavation and diversion of groundwater. There is minimal construction associated with this alternative, and there are no other NPS actions or plans proposed for the immediate vicinity. Reasonably foreseeable future actions by the local community such as construction of a river trail and development of a neighboring site would result in minor, short-term adverse impacts to geology and soils in the vicinity of the Riverway Headquarters site. Cumulatively, Alternative B would be a small component of the overall impacts resulting from actions implemented by the local community.

Conclusion—Alternative B would have negligible short-term and long-term impacts on the geology, hydrology, and soils at the existing Riverway Headquarters site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s soil or geologic resources or values from Alternative B.

5.1.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—This alternative would involve constructing a new Riverway Headquarters facility on the “upper portion” (east of Hamilton Street or, possibly, on the current location of the street) of the existing Headquarters property with subsequent demolition of the existing Headquarters facility. Dakota variant silt loam characterizes the higher portions of this site. This soil is somewhat better drained than the Fluvaquents soil characteristic of the lower portions of this site where the current Headquarters is located. There would be considerable ground disturbance with implementation of Alternative C in terms of removal of paved surfaces, excavation for new construction, removal of existing vegetative cover, and regrading of the site for both new facility construction and, possibly for wetland construction in the vicinity of the present Headquarters building. Impacts from these construction activities would be short-term, moderate in intensity and adverse, however they would only occur during construction. Construction “up hill” from the spring-fed trout pond could adversely effect the spring as well as water quality from construction site surface runoff. This impact could be mitigated through a hydrogeologic study of the groundwater-fed spring and avoiding disruption of the flow as a result of construction. New construction on higher ground would eliminate the current structural problems with groundwater around the foundation of the Headquarters facility. Although best management practices would be used to reduce surface runoff and erosion into the St. Croix River, some minimal erosion and resultant sediment would impact the river in the immediate vicinity of the Riverway Headquarters. This alternative could present opportunities to use the groundwater from the spring and high water table in construction of an on-site wetland area improve water quality in the long term and to use in NPS education programs.

Cumulative Impacts—Foreseeable future actions include participation by the City of St. Croix Falls, WI, in the siting and construction of Alternative C. The city would relocate and bury existing utility lines along Hamilton Street, which currently bisects the existing Riverway Headquarters site. The improvements to the local utilities would be simultaneous with the construction of the proposed headquarters building, which could result in minor increases to soil disturbance and erosion. The cumulative intensity of these associated actions would result in minor disturbances to soil and potential soil erosion during the construction phase of the project. Other reasonably foreseeable future actions by the local community include the construction of a river trail. Construction of the river trail would not likely be coincidental with construction of the proposed headquarters building and utility improvements, but would result in short-term, minor adverse impacts to soils and result in minor erosion during construction. The cumulative impacts from this alternative and associated actions and other foreseeable actions would result

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in additional minor, short-term and long-term soil and subsoil disturbance and resultant minor potential increases in soil erosion.

Conclusion—Alternative C could have a moderate, short-term and/or a long-term adverse impact on the groundwater quality and quantity.

Impairment—Because there would be no major, adverse impacts to a soil are geologic resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Riverway; (3) identified as a goal in the Riverway's GMP or other relevant NPS planning documents, there would be no impairment of the Riverway's soil or geologic resources or values from Alternative C.

5.1.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Groundwater and soil conditions are somewhat variable at the Indianhead Flowage site, therefore the impacts of Alternative D construction would vary depending on the exact location selected. The well-drained Menahga loams characteristic of the terraces along SR 87 in the vicinity of the existing NPS maintenance facility (Ray's Garage) would be suitable for construction, providing the small streams crossing the site are avoided. Groundwater would present a minimal problem for construction on these terraces although the high permeability of these soils would require caution in terms of preventing groundwater pollution during and after construction. Locations closer to the river at this site would place facilities on Plover fine sandy loam, which has a high seasonal water table and would probably require additional engineering to prevent foundation and drainage problems. Fluvaquent (hydric) soils characterize riverfront locations at the Indianhead Flowage site, thereby making these locations unsuitable for construction. There are also wetland (hydric) soils associated with the perennial streams crossing the Indianhead Flowage site. Although best management practices would be used during construction, some erosion from construction sites would be expected with the sandy, loamy soils. Rapid percolation through these soils along with a high groundwater table makes the use of septic systems problematic resulting in impacts that would be moderate, short-term and adverse.

Cumulative Impacts—Construction of a new NPS Riverway Headquarters at the Indianhead Flowage site would be accomplished only if the City of St. Croix Falls, WI, extended sewer and other utility services through the site from the vicinity of Lion's Park. Cumulative impacts from these actions would include clearing of vegetation for utility right-of-way and soil disturbance would cumulatively add to the minor, short-term, adverse erosion potential created by construction of the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility. Utility line extension would also add to the potential for minor, short-term and long-term adverse impacts to on-site groundwater resources through flow disturbance and an increased potential for future groundwater contamination from leaking sewer lines. The short-term, minor adverse impacts from construction of the headquarters facility and the short-term, minor adverse impacts resulting from the foreseeable action of coincidental utility improvements would not result in cumulative impacts greater than short-term, minor, adverse impacts.

Conclusions—Providing that future construction at the Indianhead Flowage site is confined to higher terrace areas, Alternative D would have moderate, short-term adverse impacts through potential increased soil erosion and possible moderate, short-term and long-term adverse impacts on groundwater resources at the site.

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Impairment—Because there would be no major, adverse impacts to a soil or geologic resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Riverway; (3) identified as a goal in the Riverway’s GMP or other relevant NPS planning documents, there would be no impairment of the Riverway’s soil or geologic resources or values from Alternative D.

5.1.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—Alternative E would involve new construction on a highly disturbed site originally characterized as containing Mahatomedi loamy sand, which was excavated for use in nearby roadway construction. Fill, which MnDOT reportedly placed on the site later, is uncharacterized. The Mahatomedi native soil is highly permeable, and given the elevation of the site on a moraine, groundwater levels would be expected to be fairly deep. The flat to somewhat concave site would result in little erosion during or after construction. The high level of permeability of the underlying soil/sand/gravel would make the installation of any septic system problematic. Impacts from Alternative E would be short-term and minor in intensity and adverse.

Cumulative Impacts—Foreseeable future actions include the improvements to local utilities to serve the new facility. The utility improvements would be simultaneous with the construction of the proposed headquarters building, which could result in minor increases to soil disturbance and erosion. The cumulative intensity of these associated actions would result in minor disturbances to soil and potential soil erosion during the construction phase of the project. The cumulative impacts from this alternative and other foreseeable actions would result in only minor, short-term increases in erosion potential and a negligible impact on groundwater resources.

Conclusions—Construction associated with Alternative E would have minor short-term adverse and negligible long-term impacts on soils. Alternative E would have a negligible impact on geology or groundwater.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s soil or geologic resources or values from Alternative E.

5.1.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—This alternative would involve constructing an addition to the existing Polk County Information Center (PCIC) that would serve as the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility. This site is highly disturbed and partially covered with impervious surfaces. Other than controlling erosion through best management practices during construction, there would be negligible short-term impacts. Potential impacts at the existing Riverway Headquarters site, would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other actions or plans would have an impact on geological resources or soils, cumulative effects of Alternative F on geological resources and soils would be negligible.

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Conclusion—Alternative F would have negligible short-term and long-term impacts on the geology, hydrology, and soils at the existing Riverway Headquarters site and at the PCIC site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's soil or geologic resources or values from Alternative F.

5.2 Surface Water

5.2.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focused on protection of water quality in the St. Croix River and its tributaries both during construction and through constructed facility operations. Control of erosion during construction and minimization of changes in storm water quantity and quality after construction would be key concerns.

Basis of Analysis—

Storm Water Impacts—Storm water quantity and quality would be affected temporarily by construction activities and permanently by changes in impervious surface area and storm water controls. Creating or maintaining natural buffers between construction sites and operating facilities and the St. Croix River and/or its tributaries would also reduce potential storm water impacts.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—Neither surface water quality nor hydrology would be changed from current conditions
- **Minor**—Changes in surface water quality or hydrology would be measurable, although the changes would likely be small and the effects would be localized. No mitigation measures would be necessary.
- **Moderate**—Changes in surface water quality and/or hydrology would be measurable and long-term but would be relatively local. Mitigation measures would be necessary and would be effective.
- **Major**—Changes in surface water quality and/or hydrology would be measurable and noticeable. Mitigation measures would be necessary and their success would not be guaranteed.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Recovery in less than a year.
 - **Long-Term**—Essentially a permanent post-construction impact.

5.2.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—The No-Action would not change the amount or location of impervious surfaces, the existing drainage patterns, or the quality or quantity of storm water discharged from the current Riverway Headquarters site, which would result in short- and long-term negligible impacts. Surface runoff from the paved parking area and boat launch area north of the Headquarters and from the end of Massachusetts Street south of the Headquarters would continue to enter the St. Croix with a minimum of vegetated buffer between the end of pavement and the river.

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Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative A on surface water quality or quantity would be negligible.

Conclusions—The No-Action alternative would have a short- and long-term, negligible impact on the St. Croix River with no change in parking lot and street runoff.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's surface water resources or values from Alternative A.

5.2.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Since Alternative B would primarily concern internal renovations of the existing Riverway Headquarters facility and result in no change in the type or location of exterior impervious surfaces, this alternative would have potential impacts essentially identical to those discussed above for the No-Action Alternative, which would be negligible in both the short- and long-term.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative B on surface water quality and quantity would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative B would have short- and long-term negligible impacts on the St. Croix River with no change in parking lot and street runoff.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's surface water resources or values from Alternative B.

5.2.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Alternative C would move the new Riverway Headquarters building and its associated parking back away from the edge of the river. This alternative would present an opportunity to incorporate more pervious surface parking/roadway area, storm water control structures, and a possible constructed wetland on the present site of the Riverway Headquarters. These actions would reduce the amount of storm water runoff entering the river directly from roadway and parking areas. Increased filtering of storm water by vegetated swales and a constructed wetland area would also improve storm water quality and provide an opportunity to showcase sustainable/site-sensitive construction along the Riverway. Building construction and demolition along with any wetland construction on the site would temporarily increase erosion potential and could adversely impact the existing trout pond on the site and adjacent St. Croix River waters. A buffer zone should be established around the trout pond to keep construction equipment away from this resource and to protect it from construction site runoff. The trout pond and the small channelized stream originating from the pond are considered wetlands under NPS policy. See Section 5.1.4 above. Short-term impacts from this alternative would be minor and adverse, however these impacts would be minimized by incorporating best management practices for storm water control into construction specifications resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts to surface water quality.

Cumulative Impacts—A foreseeable future action associated with this site would be the proposed construction of the river trail. Construction of the river trail would not likely be

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coincidental with construction of the proposed headquarters building and utility improvements, but would result in short-term, minor adverse impacts to surface water minor erosion during construction. The cumulative impacts from this alternative and other foreseeable actions would be short-term, minor adverse impacts. Future construction of a wetland intercepting surface runoff prior to its entry in to the St. Croix River would contribute to the minor, long-term, beneficial impacts of this alternative on surface water quality.

Conclusions—Alternative C would result in minor, short-term, adverse impacts to storm water quality coming from the site due to construction and demolition activities. However, there would be moderate, long-term beneficial impacts on both storm water quantity and storm water quality entering the St. Croix River from the Riverway Headquarters site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s surface water resources or values from Alternative C.

5.2.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Except for the small amount of impervious or semi-impervious area associated with the existing NPS maintenance facility at Indianhead Flowage, the area is covered in second and third-growth vegetation thus allowing natural drainage and percolation of surface water. The siting of a new Riverway Headquarters facility at Indianhead Flowage would increase the amount of impervious surface and therefore would result in some increase in volume of storm water runoff and in some local degradation of storm water quality due to building, roadway, and parking lot runoff. These construction impacts would result in short- and long-term, moderate adverse impacts to surface water quality. However, there is the opportunity to incorporate more pervious surface in the design of the parking/roadway area, add in storm water control structures, and possibly construct a wetland on site. These actions would reduce the amount of storm water runoff entering the river directly from roadway and parking areas. Increased filtering of storm water by vegetated swales and a constructed wetland area would also improve storm water quality and provide an opportunity to showcase sustainable/site-sensitive construction along the Riverway. Preliminary facility siting at Indianhead Flowage indicates that construction activities would be set back at least 100 feet from the edge of the river with a considerable amount of natural vegetated buffer retained. This would minimize any direct impacts to the St. Croix River from storm water runoff. This alternative would also present an opportunity to incorporate more pervious surface parking/roadway area, storm water control structures, and a possible constructed wetland on the present site of the Riverway Headquarters.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative D on surface water quality and quantity would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative D would result in moderate short-term and long-term adverse impacts relative to storm water quantity and quality at the Indianhead Flowage site.

Impairment—Because there would be no major, adverse impacts to surface water resources or values whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Riverway; (3) identified as a goal in the Riverway’s GMP or other relevant NPS planning documents, there would be no impairment of the Riverway’s surface water resources or values from Alternative D.

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5.2.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—Existing impervious surfaces at the Heritage Coalition Site include an access road extending from SR 95 to an overlook at the edge of the bluff and some limited sidewalk areas in the vicinity of the overlook and a small pavilion. The site is primarily covered in old field vegetation with many introduced grasses and forbs along with some scattered native prairie plant species. Storm drainage off of the site is minimal due to the high permeability of the soils resulting in negligible short- and long-term impacts. The necessity for storm water control facilities to manage runoff from a new Riverway Headquarters and associated parking would probably be minimal given the rapid percolation of water through the existing soils. Given the distance both vertically and horizontally from the river, construction at this site would not impact the quantity or quality of storm water directly entering the river. This alternative would also present an opportunity to incorporate more pervious surface parking/roadway area, storm water control structures, and a possible constructed wetland on the present site of the Riverway Headquarters. These actions would reduce the amount of storm water runoff entering the river directly from roadway and parking areas. Increased filtering of storm water by vegetated swales and a constructed wetland area would also improve storm water quality and provide an opportunity to showcase sustainable/site-sensitive construction along the Riverway. This alternative would also present an opportunity to incorporate more pervious surface parking/roadway area, storm water control structures, and a possible constructed wetland on the present site of the Riverway Headquarters.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative E on surface water quality and quantity would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have negligible impacts on storm water quality or quantity leaving the vicinity of the site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's surface water resources or values from Alternative E.

5.2.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—Alternative F would add a small amount of impervious surface in terms of building footprint at the PCIC site. General surface drainage patterns from this site would remain essentially unchanged. Additional visitation to the PCIC site as a result of the Riverway St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility would contribute to some minor additional pollutants in storm water runoff, particularly in the form of oils, greases, and metals from vehicular use, which would result in short- and long-term impacts that would be minor in intensity and adverse. Impacts would be negligible at the existing Riverway Headquarters.

Cumulative Impacts—None of the other foreseeable actions or plans would add cumulative impacts to this alternative, however siting the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility at the PCIC site would add to vehicle-associated pollutants already present in parking and roadway areas. The cumulative intensity of the addition of pollutants to the existing parking and roadway area would result in a long-term, minor, adverse impact to surface waters.

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Conclusions—Alternative F would have a negligible impact on the St. Croix River with no change in parking lot and street runoff at the existing Riverway Headquarters site and would introduce minor, long-term adverse impacts to parking lot runoff at the PCIC site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s surface water resources or values from Alternative F.

5.3 Wetlands

5.3.1 Methodology

Impacts to existing wetlands as well as “other waters of the U.S.” as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act are regulated as per NPS guidance through DO No. 77-1. As such, there is a goal of “no net loss of wetlands,” and the classification and inventorying of wetlands follows Cowardin, et al, (1979). Consequently, the definition of a “wetland” requires one or more of the “three parameters” given by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE)(*e.g.*, hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soil, wetland hydrology). As such, ponds and streams are considered wetlands by NPS policy. Furthermore, state regulations protecting wetlands are applicable as well, and include the Wetland Mapping Act (Wis. Stat. Ann. §23.32), Shoreland Management Program (Wis. Admin. Code Ch. NR115), and Water Quality Certification (Wis. Admin. Code NR299), among others. The potential to enhance and/or construct wetlands for both ecological and educational purposes are important considerations in alternative analysis.

Basis for Analysis—

Wetland Impacts—Changes in surface drainage patterns, the use of fill in construction, and surface contaminants from construction and/or facility operations may impact wetland areas in proximity to facility siting. In-stream work within any NPS wetland or USACOE-defined “other waters of the U.S.” including ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, would require permitting and mitigation. Impacts to wetlands that exceed 0.1 acre may require a “Statement of Findings.” The NPS adopts a goal of “no net loss of wetlands.”

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—Wetlands or “other waters of the U.S.” neither directly impacted by fill nor indirectly impacted by changes in drainage patterns.
- **Minor**—Wetlands fill below Nationwide Permit thresholds (0.1 acre fill or less) and/or indirect impacts from changes in drainage patterns. No more than 200 linear feet of impact to streams and drainages.
- **Moderate**—Fill of 0.1—0.5 acre of wetland requiring a Nationwide Permit with mitigation and/or indirect impacts on wetlands of exceptional high quality from changes in drainage patterns. No more than 300 linear feet of impact to streams and drainages.
- **Major**—Fill of any size of wetlands of exceptional quality and/or any other wetlands requiring an individual Section 404 permit with mitigation (greater than 0.5 acre of impact). Greater than 300 linear feet of impact to streams and drainages.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Impacts from temporary modifications to surface flows to wetland areas during construction.

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- **Long-Term**—Essentially a permanent construction/post-construction impacts to wetlands either directly through fill or indirectly through drainage changes.

5.3.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Continued routine maintenance of the existing Riverway Headquarters facility would have a negligible impact on wetlands and other waters of the U.S.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative A on surface water quality and quantity would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative A would have a negligible impact on wetlands or other waters of the U.S.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wetland resources or values from Alternative A.

5.3.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Since Alternative B, as with Alternative A, involves only the existing Riverway Headquarters building with no exterior changes other than some possible modifications of exterior foundation walls to correct the existing moisture and mold problems in the building, it would also have a negligible impact on wetlands or other waters of the U.S.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative B on surface water quality and quantity would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative B would have a negligible impact on wetlands or other waters of the U.S.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wetland resources or values from Alternative B.

5.3.4 Alternative C (New Facility on Existing Site)

Analysis—Alternative C could have some direct impact on the perennial stream in the northern portion of the site and/or indirect impact on the flow of groundwater feeding the existing trout pond and channelized stream (NPS wetlands). However, the demolition of the existing Riverway Headquarters after construction of a new facility on site would provide an opportunity to create an on-site wetland that could be easily monitored for functioning, could serve as a mitigation site, and would provide an on-site educational opportunity. The possible future construction of wetlands on the existing Riverway Headquarters site would create potential for a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact to wetlands and wetland functioning along the St. Croix River in the vicinity of St. Croix Falls, WI.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on surface water resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative C on wetlands would

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be negligible. Potential cumulative beneficial impacts could occur if a wetland area were constructed at the site.

Conclusions—Without the future construction of a wetlands as discussed in Analysis above, Alternative C could have a minor, short- and long-term adverse impact on wetlands.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wetland resources or values from Alternative C.

5.3.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Small, high quality, spring-fed streams crisscross the Indianhead Flowage site and are associated with scattered wetlands. The final site selection process would avoid wetlands and NPS Best Management Practices would be utilized resulting in minor short- and long-term adverse impacts. A wetlands survey would be needed prior to siting of a new Riverway Headquarters facility at Indianhead Flowage. As with Alternative C, the possible future construction of wetlands at the existing Riverway Headquarters site is a possibility, which could result in long-term beneficial impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—Cumulative impacts from Alternative D at the Indianhead Flowage site would be negligible since no other foreseeable actions are anticipated for the area nor have there been any other recent actions at the Indianhead Flowage site that would contribute to cumulative impacts. The possible future construction of a wetlands on the existing Riverway Headquarters site would create potential for a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact to wetlands and wetland functioning along the St. Croix River in the vicinity of St. Croix Falls, WI.

Conclusions—Alternative D would have minor, short-term adverse impacts on perennial streams and wetlands within the Indianhead Flowage Site during construction. Long-term impacts could be moderate in intensity and beneficial.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wetland resources or values from Alternative D.

5.3.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—There are no areas of wetlands or streams that would be impacted by site development at the Heritage Coalition Site. As with Alternatives C and D, the possible future construction of wetlands at the existing Riverway Headquarters site is a possibility with Alternative E. This alternative would result in short- and long-term negligible impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—Cumulative impacts from Alternative E at the Heritage Coalition Site would be negligible since no other foreseeable actions are anticipated for the area nor have there been an other recent actions at the site that would contribute to cumulative impacts. The possible future construction of a wetlands on the existing Riverway Headquarters site would create potential for a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact to wetlands and wetland functioning along the St. Croix River in the vicinity of St. Croix Falls, WI.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have a negligible impact on wetlands. Long-term impacts could be moderate in intensity and beneficial.

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Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s wetland resources or values from Alternative E.

5.3.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—There are no wetlands at the PCIC site, and no wetlands would be impacted at the current Riverway Headquarters site with existing building renovation, resulting in short- and long-term negligible impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on wetlands, cumulative impacts from Alternative F on wetlands would be negligible.

Conclusions—All impacts of Alternative F on wetlands would be negligible.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s wetland resources or values from Alternative F.

5.4 Ecological Resources (Vegetation)

5.4.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focused on the amount of disturbance to existing on-site terrestrial and aquatic vegetation communities. Important factors include the quality of natural vegetation on site, the amount of site clearing necessary for construction, the role of the site in terms of unique habitat, and importance in connectivity of the ecological landscape. Potential for site restoration is also a factor in evaluation of impacts.

Basis of Analysis—The basis for analysis was the amount of direct disturbance to terrestrial and aquatic vegetation present at the sites. Impacts on any state or federal rare, threatened, or endangered plants were also assessed.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—No native terrestrial plant communities and/or aquatic plant communities would be disturbed and there would be no direct or indirect impacts on native vegetation, including federally listed species.
- **Minor**—Disturbance of regionally typical native terrestrial plant communities and/or aquatic plant communities would be limited to under one acre for terrestrial communities and to highly localized areas of small tributaries to the St. Croix River. There would be no impact on federally listed plant species.
- **Moderate**—Disturbance of regionally typical native terrestrial plant communities and/or aquatic plant communities would occur. The area of disturbance would be from one to five acres of terrestrial habitat and the length of a St. Croix River tributary from the point of construction disturbance to the St. Croix River. There could be indirect impacts to federally listed plant species.
- **Major**—Disturbance of more than five acres of regionally typical terrestrial plant community or any acreage of critical habitat for federally listed plant species. Disturbance of both a tributary of the St. Croix River and a measurable portion of the St. Croix River itself.

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- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Complete disturbance recovery in less than five years.
 - **Long-Term**—Disturbance recovery requiring more than five years to return to pre-disturbance level.

5.4.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Existing landscaped areas as well as the small wooded area along the northern boundary of the existing Riverway Headquarters site would not be affected by the No-Action Alternative. Existing levels of disturbance of terrestrial and near-shore aquatic vegetation would continue unchanged from the past several decades. Scattered plants of the rare (but not listed in Wisconsin) false mermaid weed in the wooded area north of the Headquarters would not be disturbed.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on terrestrial or aquatic vegetation resources, cumulative impacts from Alternative A on vegetation resources would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative A would have a negligible impact on terrestrial or aquatic vegetation communities.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's vegetation resources or values from Alternative A.

5.4.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Alternative B activities would primarily involve inside remodeling of the existing facility and therefore impacts to surrounding terrestrial or aquatic vegetation communities would be negligible in the short- and long-term.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on terrestrial or aquatic vegetation, cumulative impacts from Alternative B on vegetation resources would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative B would have a negligible impact on terrestrial or aquatic vegetation communities in the vicinity of the existing Riverway Headquarters site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's vegetation resources or values from Alternative B.

5.4.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Most of the potential construction activity associated with Alternative C would take place on currently highly disturbed landscaped areas or areas currently under buildings or pavements. However, the visitor parking area could extend into the acre of wooded area along the northern border of the existing Riverway Headquarters site. This would result in short- and long-term, moderate adverse impacts from the destruction of at least some of the existing woodland community, displace or cover a perennial stream, and possibly impact rare and native specimens including false mermaid weed. The possible construction of wetlands on the current

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location of the Riverway Headquarters facility would greatly enhance the site for native wetland community components and result in a moderate long-term beneficial impact. This wetland area would be maintained using the constantly flowing spring water that feeds the existing trout pond on site.

Cumulative Impacts—None of the other foreseeable actions or plans would impact wetlands in this alternative. The possible creation of constructed wetlands on the current site of the Riverway Headquarters after demolition would open the opportunity to greatly enhance the site for native vegetation associated with wetland communities in the Upper St. Croix Riverway.

Conclusions—Alternative C could have a moderate long-term adverse impact on the small amount of natural, terrestrial vegetative cover still remaining along the northern border of the existing Riverway Headquarters site. The moderate long-term adverse impact to vegetation could be partially offset by the positive impacts by the creation of a new wetland on-site.

Impairment—Because there would be no major, adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Riverway; (3) identified as a goal in the Riverway's GMP or other relevant NPS planning documents, there would be no impairment of the Riverway's vegetation resources or values from Alternative C.

5.4.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Construction at the Indianhead Flowage Site would impact existing second-growth mixed hardwood forest that covers much of the site. Small, scattered populations of Assiniboine sedge (*Carex assiniboinensis*) could be directly impacted—depending upon the exact location of the new construction. Of the various alternatives, Alternative D would have the greatest potential for a short- and long-term moderate adverse impact on native vegetation since the Indianhead Flowage Site is the least-disturbed site. The possible construction of wetlands on the current location of the Riverway Headquarters facility would greatly enhance the site for native wetland vegetation and result in a moderate long-term beneficial impact.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for the Indianhead Flowage site that would impact vegetation resources. Implementation of Alternative D would not result in any cumulative impacts to vegetation resources.

Conclusions—Although the area of potential disturbance is relatively small in comparison to the overall size of this generally wooded site, Alternative D would have a moderate long-term, moderate adverse impact on vegetation resources at the Indianhead Flowage site. The moderate long-term adverse impact to vegetation could be partially offset by the positive impacts by the creation of a new wetland on-site and/or at the existing Riverway Headquarters site.

Impairment—Because there would be no major, adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway or to opportunities for enjoyment of the Riverway; (3) identified as a goal in the Riverway's GMP or other relevant NPS planning

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documents, there would be no impairment of the Riverway's vegetation resources or values from Alternative D.

5.4.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—Construction of Alternative E would remove some of the old field and scattered prairie remnant plants, which cover most of the Heritage Coalition Site. Many of the plants present on the site are introduced weedy species resulting in short-term, minor adverse impacts. This site has been heavily disturbed by past extractive activities, and the occurrence of any rare, threatened or endangered plant at this location would be highly unlikely. There are no aquatic habitats present on or immediately adjacent to this site. The size of the site and its xeric soil characteristics would be suitable for re-establishment of native prairie on a portion of the site should a new Riverway Headquarters be located here. Revegetation with native species would result in long-term, minor beneficial impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would impact vegetation resources. Implementation of Alternative E would not result in any cumulative impacts to vegetation resources.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have minor short-term adverse impacts on the old field plant community present at the Heritage Coalition Site. Revegetation of this site with native species would result in long-term, minor beneficial impacts. This alternative would have a negligible impact on state or federal rare, threatened or endangered species of plants.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's vegetation resources or values from Alternative E.

5.4.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—There would be no natural vegetation impacted by the addition of the Riverway St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility to the existing PCIC. The PCIC is surrounded by mowed turf grass, ornamental trees and parking/paved trail areas. Indoor renovation work at the existing headquarters would also not impact natural vegetation, resulting in short- and long-term negligible impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would impact vegetation resources. Implementation of Alternative F would not result in any cumulative impacts to vegetation resources.

Conclusions—Alternative F would have a negligible impact on terrestrial or aquatic vegetation communities in the vicinity of the existing Riverway Headquarters site and near the PCIC.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's vegetation resources or values from Alternative F.

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5.5 Ecological Resources (Wildlife)

5.5.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focused on the amount of disturbance to existing on-site terrestrial and aquatic wildlife communities. Important factors include the diversity of wildlife on site, the amount of site clearing necessary for construction, the role of the site in terms of unique habitat, and importance in connectivity of the ecological landscape. Potential for site restoration and improvement in wildlife habitat are also factors in evaluation of impacts.

Basis of Analysis—The basis for analysis was the amount of direct disturbance to terrestrial and aquatic wildlife present at the sites. Impacts on any state or federal rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife species were also assessed.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—No native terrestrial or aquatic wildlife would be disturbed and there would be no direct or indirect impacts on native wildlife, including federally listed species.
- **Minor**—Disturbance of native terrestrial and/or aquatic wildlife habitat would be limited to under one acre for terrestrial communities and to highly localized areas of small tributaries to the St. Croix River. There would be no impact on federally listed species.
- **Moderate**—Disturbance of regionally typical native terrestrial and/or aquatic wildlife habitat would occur. The area of disturbance would be from one to five acres of terrestrial habitat and the length of a St. Croix River tributary from the point of construction disturbance to the St. Croix River. There could be indirect impacts to federally listed species.
- **Major**—Disturbance of more than five acres of regionally typical terrestrial wildlife habitat or any acreage of critical habitat for federally listed species. Disturbance of both a tributary of the St. Croix River and a measurable portion of the St. Croix River itself.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Complete disturbance recovery in less than five years.
 - **Long-Term**—Disturbance recovery requiring more than five years to return to pre-disturbance levels.

5.5.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Existing landscaped areas as well as the small wooded area along the northern boundary of the existing Riverway Headquarters site would result in short- and long-term negligible impacts by the No-Action Alternative. Existing levels of disturbance of terrestrial and near-shore aquatic wildlife would continue unchanged from the past several decades.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on terrestrial or aquatic wildlife, cumulative impacts from Alternative A on wildlife resources would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative A would have a negligible impact on terrestrial or aquatic wildlife communities.

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Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s wildlife resources or values from Alternative A.

5.5.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Alternative B activities would primarily involve inside remodeling of the existing facility and therefore would result in short- and long-term negligible impacts to surrounding terrestrial or aquatic wildlife communities.

Cumulative Impacts—Because none of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an impact on terrestrial or aquatic wildlife, cumulative impacts from Alternative B on wildlife resources would be negligible.

Conclusions—Alternative B would have a negligible impact on terrestrial or aquatic wildlife communities in the vicinity of the existing Riverway Headquarters site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s wildlife resources or values from Alternative B.

5.5.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Most of the potential construction activity associated with Alternative C would take place on currently highly disturbed landscaped areas or areas currently under buildings or pavements. However, the visitor parking area could extend into the acre of wooded area along the northern border of the existing Riverway Headquarters site. This would result in the destruction of at least some of the existing woodland community, displace, or cover a perennial stream, and possibly impact some species of wildlife. The potential short- and long-term minor adverse impacts from this alternative could be partially offset by revegetation of the site with native plant species. The possible construction of wetlands on the current location of the Riverway Headquarters facility would greatly enhance the site for native wetland wildlife and result in a moderate long-term beneficial impact. This wetland area would be maintained using the constantly flowing spring water that feeds the existing trout pond on site.

Cumulative Impacts—None of the other foreseeable actions or plans would impact wetlands in this alternative. The possible creation of constructed wetlands on the current site of the Riverway Headquarters after demolition would open the opportunity to greatly enhance the site for native wildlife associated with wetland communities in the Upper St. Croix Riverway resulting in cumulative impacts that would be long-term, minor in intensity and beneficial.

Conclusions—Alternative C could have a minor long-term adverse impact on the small amount of natural, wildlife cover still remaining along the northern border of the existing Riverway Headquarters site. The adverse impact to wildlife could be partially offset by the positive impacts by the creation of a new wetland on-site and planting of native species.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway’s wildlife resources or values from Alternative C.

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5.5.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Construction at the Indianhead Flowage Site would impact existing second-growth mixed hardwood forest that provides habitat for wildlife. Some indirect or direct impacts to aquatic macroinvertebrates and vertebrates inhabiting streams and associated wetlands at this site could occur depending on the exact location of new construction. The Louisiana waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) has been observed in this area during migration and may nest in the area. This bird is of special concern in Minnesota, but has no known special status in Wisconsin. Alternative D would result in short- and long-term, minor adverse impacts. Of the various alternatives, Alternative D would have a greater potential impact on native wildlife since the Indianhead Flowage Site is the least-disturbed site. The possible construction of wetlands and revegetation of native plant species on the current location of the Riverway Headquarters facility would greatly enhance the site for native wetland wildlife and result in a moderate long-term beneficial impact.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for the Indianhead Flowage site that would impact wildlife resources. Implementation of Alternative D would result in negligible cumulative impacts to wildlife resources.

Conclusions—The area of potential disturbance is relatively small in comparison to the overall size of this generally wooded site, Alternative D would have a minor short- and long-term impact on wildlife resources at the Indianhead Flowage site.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wildlife resources or values from Alternative D.

5.5.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—Construction of Alternative E would remove some old field and prairie habitat, which cover most of the Heritage Coalition Site. This site has been heavily disturbed by past extractive activities, and the occurrence of any rare, threatened or endangered wildlife at this location would be highly unlikely. Many of the associated wildlife species present on the site are adaptable to disturbed sites. There are no aquatic habitats present on or immediately adjacent to this site. Implementation of this alternative would result in short- and long-term minor adverse impacts to wildlife resources, however revegetation of the new facility could partially offset the minor adverse impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would impact wildlife resources. Implementation of Alternative E would not result in any cumulative impacts to wildlife resources.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have minor short- and long-term adverse impacts on old field wildlife present at the Heritage Coalition Site. This alternative would have a negligible impact on state or federal rare, threatened or endangered species of wildlife.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wildlife resources or values from Alternative E.

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5.5.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—There would be no wildlife impacted by the addition of the Riverway St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility to the existing PCIC. The PCIC is surrounded by mowed turf grass, ornamental trees and parking/paved trail areas. The proposed addition to PCIC plus indoor renovation work at the existing headquarters would result in short- and long-term negligible impacts to wildlife.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would impact wildlife resources. Implementation of Alternative F would result in negligible cumulative impacts to wildlife resources.

Conclusions—Alternative F would have a short- and long-term negligible impact on terrestrial or aquatic wildlife communities in the vicinity of the existing Riverway Headquarters site and near the PCIC.

Impairment—There would be no impairment of the Riverway's wildlife resources or values from Alternative F.

5.6 Solid, Special, and Hazardous Wastes

5.6.1 Methodology

Impact analysis centers on minimization of waste generation during construction and possible demolition as well as on any hazardous waste remediation necessary as part of site preparation. Opportunities for affirmative procurement (purchasing of "green" products and materials) as part of construction and for constructing to facilitate future building reuse are also examined in the analysis.

Basis of Analysis—

Renovation/demolition/construction Wastes—Impacts are qualitatively evaluated in terms of potential generation of solid waste materials as well as opportunities for reuse and recycling or construction materials.

Hazardous Waste Contamination—Impacts are discussed concerning the potential presence, handling, and disposal of hazardous wastes associated with renovation, demolition, and construction.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—There would be no generation of solid, special, or hazardous wastes beyond existing operational background levels. Very limited opportunities would be available to incorporate reused or recycled materials or generally exercise affirmative procurement in the purchase of "green" construction materials.
- **Minor**—There would be generation of solid or hazardous wastes above normal headquarters operational levels, but quantities of solid wastes would be manageable by use of on-site construction waste dumpsters and amounts of special or solid wastes would be

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managed through small service contracts or purchase orders. There would be some limited opportunities to incorporate reused, recycled, or other “green” construction materials.

- **Moderate**—Solid and/or special wastes would be generated at levels requiring special contracts for removal, handling, and disposal off site. Any hazardous waste would be manageable through the use of small contracts or purchase orders. There would be numerous opportunities to incorporate reused, recycled, and other “green” building materials into construction.
- **Major**—Solid and special wastes as well as hazardous wastes would be generated at levels requiring specialized contractors to remove, handle and disposed of the wastes. There would be maximal opportunities to incorporate reused, recycled, and other “green” building products in construction.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Changes in waste generation during a period of one year or less.
 - **Long-Term**—Changes in waste generation lasting over one year.

5.6.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Alternative A would result in little generation of solid wastes since activities associated with this alternative would be confined to a continuation of on-going, routine maintenance and implementation of stopgap measures to correct facility deficiencies resulting in short- and long-term, minor beneficial impacts. Any special waste generation such as maintenance-related removal of asbestos-containing materials (ACM) or lead-based paint would be handled on a case-by-case bases and would involve small volumes of waste. No known hazardous materials as defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) are known to occur in or around the existing Riverway Headquarters facility.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would result in an increase of solid or hazardous wastes. Implementation of Alternative A would not result in any cumulative impacts to solid or hazardous waste handling or storage.

Conclusions—The No-Action Alternative would have a negligible short-term and long-term impact on solid and hazardous waste generation. Furthermore, this alternative would have a minor, short-term and long-term beneficial impact in terms of preventing the generation and subsequent need for disposal of demolition debris.

5.6.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Alternative B would generate a substantial amount of solid waste from major interior renovation work. Wastes such as sheet rock, flooring, wood wastes, lighting fixtures, etc. would probably be generated by this alternative. Minor amounts of ACM may be encountered and could require special handling if in friable form. Building materials heavily infested with mold and other fungal organisms may also be encountered during renovation. By preserving the use of the existing building, this alternative would have a minor short- and long-term beneficial impact on solid waste generation through the prevention of demolition debris generation. There would also be a moderate, short-term beneficial impact from this alternative in terms of providing opportunities to incorporate the use of recycled and other “green” building materials in construction.

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Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would result in an increase of solid or hazardous wastes. Implementation of Alternative B would not result in any cumulative impacts to solid or hazardous waste handling or storage.

Conclusions—This alternative would have moderate, short-term adverse impacts in terms of solid and, possibly, special (asbestos) waste generation during the renovation activities. Alternative B would have a short- and long-term minor beneficial impact on avoidance of waste generation.

5.6.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Alternative C would generate solid waste from both demolition and construction activities at the existing Riverway Headquarters site. Waste generating activities would include, but not be limited to, asphalt removal, tree and brush clearing, excavation soil, construction wastes, and rubble from demolition of the existing Headquarters building. Minor amounts of ACM could be encountered that would require special handling. Some solid waste generation as part of eventual demolition of the existing facility could be avoided by allowing the public access to usable structural elements prior to final demolition. There are no known sites contaminated with RCRA-regulated substances on the current Riverway Headquarters site. Additionally, there would be the possibility for moderate, short-term beneficial effects resulting from this alternative in terms of material reuse, recycling, and incorporation of “green” construction.

Cumulative Impacts—Construction associated with the action of placing underground and/or rerouting of existing utility lines through the current Riverway Headquarters site would cumulatively result in moderate, short-term increases of solid waste. The intensity of cumulative impacts from the addition of wastes from other actions to Alternative C would be short-term, and adverse, but lasting only during the construction phase of the proposed project.

Conclusions—Alternative C would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on local generation of solid wastes and, possibly, special wastes. This alternative would have a negligible impact on hazardous waste generation.

5.6.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—This alternative would generate more solid waste than the other alternatives since more clearing of existing vegetation would be required. However, this cannot be quantified at this time since the exact location and building orientation on the site and the structural footprints have not been determined. Some pavement removal could be required along with demolition (or moving) of the existing NPS maintenance building. This would depend upon the exact location selected for new construction at the Indianhead Flowage Site. This alternative would also include the demolition of the existing Riverway Headquarters facility, which, in turn would result in additional solid waste generation similar to that described for Alternative C. A Level 1 Pre-Acquisition Environmental Site Assessment (including sampling of soil borings and groundwater) would also be required as part of Alternative D to determine residual contamination from underground storage tanks (UST) associated with the former Ray’s Garage. Reportedly there were seven USTs in service at Ray’s Garage, which is now the location of the NPS maintenance facility. Moderate, short-term beneficial impacts would accrue from opportunities to use recycled and “green” building products.

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Cumulative Impacts—Construction associated with the action of clearing of vegetation with utility right-of-way and/or easement extensions would cumulatively result in moderate, short-term increases of solid waste. The intensity of cumulative impacts from the addition of wastes from other actions to Alternative D would be short-term, and adverse, but lasting only during the construction phase of the proposed project.

Conclusions—Alternative D would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on the local generation of solid wastes, possibly a moderate, short-term adverse impact on generation of special wastes, and a possible moderate short-term adverse impact on generation of hazardous wastes from petroleum-contaminated soil removal.

5.6.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—Alternative E would generate a relatively small amount of solid waste from any site clearing actions since the site is very open. Some demolition of the existing paved surfaces in the vicinity of the overlook as well as possible demolition of the existing small pavilion may be required. Substantial amounts of excavated soil, sand and gravel could be generated in the placement of building footers since the existing soils reportedly have poor load-bearing capacities and bedrock is deep at the site resulting in impacts that would be short-term, moderate in intensity and adverse. However, these impacts would only last as long as construction. The same amount of solid wastes and, possibly, special wastes would also be generated from existing facility demolition, site regrading, etc. as described for Alternatives C and D. Moderate, long-term beneficial impacts would accrue from opportunities to use recycled and “green” building products.

Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would result in an increase of solid or hazardous wastes. Implementation of Alternative E would not result in any cumulative impacts to solid or hazardous waste handling or storage.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on local generation of solid wastes, and, possibly, on special wastes. There would be negligible impacts on hazardous waste generation.

5.6.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—In addition to the solid and special waste generation associated with renovation efforts at the existing Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility discussed with Alternative B, Alternative F would generate some additional solid waste from building addition work and parking lot reconfiguration at the PCIC. This alternative would have moderate, short-term adverse impacts in terms of solid and, possibly, special (asbestos) waste generation during the renovation activities at the existing Headquarters site and from building addition work at the PCIC. Alternative F would have a negligible impact on hazardous waste generation. By preserving the use of the existing building, this alternative would have a moderate long-term beneficial impact on solid waste generation through the prevention of demolition debris generation. There would also be a moderate, long-term beneficial impact from this alternative in terms of providing opportunities to incorporate the use of recycled and other “green” building materials in renovation and construction. The beneficial impacts of green design and reduction in future solid waste generation would partially offset the short-term impacts of construction.

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Cumulative Impacts—There have been no other recent projects and there are no other foreseeable future actions or plans for this site that would result in an increase of solid or hazardous wastes. Implementation of Alternative F would not result in any cumulative impacts to solid or hazardous waste handling or storage.

Conclusions—This alternative would result in moderate, short-term, adverse impacts due to the generation of additional solid (and possible special) wastes, and a negligible impact on hazardous waste generation. Alternative F would have a short- and long-term minor beneficial impact on avoidance of waste generation.

5.7 Visitor Experience and Aesthetics

5.7.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focuses on accessibility and convenience, relationship to natural and built environments, connectivity to the Riverway, and opportunities for outdoor experiential educational programs. Opportunities to “properly fit” the facility to a site is also examined.

Basis of Analysis—

Visibility, Community Connectivity, and Accessibility—Impacts of the alternatives are discussed based on visibility of the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility within the community and from the entrance to the location of the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility. Physical accessibility to the building, including the incorporation of Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) standards is also examined.

Educational Opportunities—The potential opportunities associated with each alternative in terms of providing indoor exhibit space, interactive exhibits, and outdoor experiential educational opportunities are examined.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—Conditions would remain essentially unchanged from the current situation.
- **Minor**—There would be small noticeable improvements or deterioration in the physical accessibility to the building, and in educational opportunities. There would be no noticeable change in site aesthetics.
- **Moderate**—Visibility, accessibility, and community connectivity would be very noticeably improved over current conditions. Educational opportunities associated both with indoor exhibits and outdoor classroom space would be noticeably improved or noticeably deteriorated. Site aesthetics would be noticeably improved or noticeably worse when compared to existing current conditions.
- **Major**—Visibility, accessibility, and community connectivity would be maximized for visitors to the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility. Educational opportunities would also be maximally optimal both indoors and out, or they would be considerably worse than under current conditions. Architecture and site aesthetics would be an outstanding example of sustainable siting, design, and construction, or architecture and site aesthetics would fall far short of NPS goals for sustainability.

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- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Lasting only during construction.
 - **Long-Term**—Permanent post-construction changes.

5.7.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Educational opportunities would remain limited because of the limited and dated indoor exhibit space and lack of biological diversity at the site for outdoor experiential education programs. There would also be a moderate, long-term adverse impact on indoor educational experiences for visitors as existing exhibits become even more outdated. The present bank-side view of the river from the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility would be maintained. This alternative would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on community connectivity due to its close proximity to downtown St. Croix Falls, which would continue to encourage visitors to travel through downtown and to bring them into proximity to various businesses. There is also a possibility that the site would eventually be connected with downtown and areas farther north along the river (Lion's Park) by a city-planned trail extension.

Cumulative Impacts—The primary potential long-term cumulative impact of Alternative A would be that visitors may use NPS facilities and come into contact with NPS personnel progressively less over time. This would be the result of other visitor information and educational facilities in the St. Croix Falls and Taylors Falls area continuing to upgrade their services while the NPS visitor services continue to deteriorate. None of the other foreseeable actions or plans would have an adverse impact on visitor experience, in fact these other actions would partially offset the adverse cumulative impacts from taking no action.

Conclusions—This alternative would have a negligible short-term impact on most aspects of visitor experience and aesthetics. However, Alternative A would have a moderate, long-term, adverse impact on visitor experience and accessibility, as the current facilities would continue to physically deteriorate. There would be a moderate long-term beneficial impact by maintaining the present aesthetic setting.

5.7.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Since the present location of the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility would be maintained with this alternative as with Alternative A, it would have many of the same impacts related to community connectivity, visibility within the community, river views and outdoor educational opportunities. Unlike Alternative A, however, Alternative B would provide an opportunity to improve internal accessibility for visitors through renovation and possible installation of an elevator system resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts. However, if the area above the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility were renovated for use, additional supports on the first floor would be necessary resulting in a possible negative impact on the visitor contact area. Additionally, the indoor educational exhibit area and exhibits themselves would be improved with Alternative B although there would be a minimum of additional space provided for visitor-related activities. Some visitor inconvenience would also occur with this alternative as a result of on-going renovation efforts, but these impacts would be short-term, minor and adverse, and would last as long as construction.

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Cumulative Impacts—Remodeling and updating the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility would help maintain the NPS facility as a unique visitor destination along the Riverway. Implementation of Alternative B, in conjunction with other foreseeable actions proposed by the City of St. Croix Falls, (e.g. river trail extension, RV camping area, downtown revitalization, etc.) would keep the Headquarters area as a focus of visitor activity and result in a cumulative beneficial impact that would be minor and long-term.

Conclusions—This alternative would have a minor, long-term beneficial impact on many aspects of visitor experience, accessibility, and facility aesthetics. This alternative would also have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on visitor experience. There would be a moderate, short-term adverse impact on visitor experience during the renovation efforts. As with Alternative A, Alternative B would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on maintaining the present view from the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility located only a few feet from the river's edge.

5.7.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—This alternative would result in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts from improved on-site visibility and accessibility of the visitor facilities with improved building layout and signage to accommodate all visitors and meeting ABA standards. Aesthetics of the building itself would be improved through use of architectural elements demonstrating form and function that fits the site and reflects NPS sustainable design features. Connectivity to downtown St. Croix Falls would remain the same as described for Alternatives A and B. Interior space devoted to educational exhibits, storage of exhibit materials, etc. would be improved as would the interactive nature of the exhibits. Although the river view would be somewhat reduced from the facility, which would be set back farther from the river, the added open space between the facility and the river could be used in outdoor education—especially if a wetland area was constructed adjacent to the river.

Cumulative Impacts—Cumulative impacts of Alternative C would be similar to those described above for Alternative B. However, the new on-site NPS facility would serve as a visitor attraction itself and would provide a higher quality of visitor experience through exhibit area design than would the remodeled facility. Other foreseeable actions would benefit visitor experience by adding trail access to the facility, and other amenities within the vicinity of the visitor facility. Visitor experience would be adversely impacted in the short-term by possible congestion on roadways and from demolition and construction of the new facility and the associated utility improvements. Adverse impacts related to new facility development would only last as long as the construction phase and would be a small component of the overall cumulative impact.

Conclusions—Alternative C would have moderate, long-term beneficial impacts on many aspects of visitor experience and accessibility. There would be a long-term minor adverse impact on viewing the river from the visitor facility. There would be a minor, short-term adverse impact on visitor accessibility to the site since new construction would involve on-site work that would cause some traffic and parking disruption during actual construction.

5.7.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—This alternative has excellent visibility for visitors since, unlike the current Riverway Headquarters site set off from SR 87 by residential development, Alternative D would

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place the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility adjacent to SR 87. There would probably be no river view directly from the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility at Indianhead Flowage. However, the facility would be surrounded by second-growth woodland. Community connectivity would not be as good as with the existing site since the Indianhead Flowage site is north of the St. Croix Falls city limits. However, the site is adjacent to the St. Croix Falls Lions Park, which provides opportunity for sharing of parking and other resources for visitors. The new facility would be fully accessible and built to ABA standards with up-to-date indoor education interactive and other interpretive exhibits resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts. Aesthetics of the building itself would be improved through use of architectural elements demonstrating form and function that fits the site and reflects NPS sustainable design features. This location would also be accessible via the existing Indianhead Flowage trail. Creation of the visitor center so close to the Indianhead Flowage trail would likely increase use of the trail; what is now a quiet trail could become much busier. Increased use of the trail may also increase disturbance to the campsite that currently exists at the end of the trail. Access to the river along a long, wooded shoreline would provide many opportunities for visitors to experience the St. Croix River. Additionally, several spring-fed streams crossing through the site along with their associated wetlands would provide an outstanding area for outdoor classroom work and other forms of experiential education. The demolition of the existing Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility would create an aesthetically pleasing open space close to the city.

Cumulative Impacts—Cumulative impacts related to Alternative D would be mainly associated with the synergy gained by proximity of Lion's Park, which is a key access point for boaters on the St. Croix River. The possibility of increased long-term visitor contact with NPS facilities and personnel would be enhanced by having the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility at this site.

Conclusions—Alternative D would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on facility visibility, access, and both indoor and outdoor visitor educational opportunities. This alternative would have a minor, long-term adverse impact on community connectivity since it is located at the northern edge of and outside the corporation limits of St. Croix Falls, WI.

5.7.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—As with Alternative D, Alternative E would place the new facility close to a major state route. However, Minnesota SR 95 carries considerably more tourist traffic than does Wisconsin SR 87 since it is a major regional route north-south route used by many vacationers and weekend travelers. The Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility would be very visible to visitors on this open and high site. Providing that limited vegetation clearing can take place on the eastern bluff overlooking the river valley from this site, the river view would be good although the river is distant from the site. The site would have moderate, long-term adverse impacts on river access since there essentially is none from this site. Community connectivity with the City of Taylors Falls, MN, would not be particularly good since the site is located some distance from downtown. Because the proposed visitor facility is a distance from downtown, this alternative would have a moderate long-term adverse impact on the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility's traditional connectivity with downtown St. Croix Falls, WI, while having a minor, long-term beneficial impact on connectivity with downtown Taylors Falls. Presently, no trails connect to the site; however, a trail is planned for future development. The new facility would be built to ABA standards and would incorporate NPS sustainable design standards to fit its surroundings. Moderate, long-term beneficial impacts to indoor educational exhibits and interactive programs would accrue from this alternative. Outdoor

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educational opportunities would be limited since there are no wetlands, woodlands, streams, or other surface waters on site. However, outdoor experiential educational opportunities would undergo moderate, long-term adverse impacts due to the paucity of natural plant communities on site and the isolation of the site from the St. Croix River. Establishment of a prairie area on site could possibly mitigate some of the disadvantages of this site as a place for outdoor learning experiences. The new facility would be built to ABA standards and would incorporate NPS sustainable design standards to fit its surroundings.

Cumulative Impacts—The foreseeable action of development of a regional trail through the Heritage Coalition site would result in a long-term beneficial cumulative impact by providing more access to the new NPS facility.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have moderate, long-term beneficial impacts on facility visibility and accessibility (including handicapped accessibility) for visitors to the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility and visitor experience in the facility. Given the setting of the site, the visual impacts of a visitor center at this facility must be minimized. However, these beneficial impacts would be partially offset by the long-term adverse impacts resulting from a lack of outdoor visitor experience and educational opportunities.

5.7.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—Alternative F would separate the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility from the Riverway Headquarters by placing it with the PCIC. This alternative would provide a highly visible NPS contact facility at the intersection of two major area highways. However, the size of the NPS facility would be severely limited by available space, and the shared parking area would probably have inadequate capacity to accommodate the additional visitors. The PCIC site is also remote from the river, has little connectivity to downtown St. Croix Falls, little to offer in the way of visual aesthetics, and would provide no opportunity for outdoor classroom space. The facility is adjacent to the Gandy Dancer Trail regional trail, which is heavily used by bicyclists, hikers, and snowmobilers. Any addition to the existing building, which is a typical one-story brick office/commercial building would need to be architecturally compatible. This type of structure would not be consistent with NPS sustainable building standards. Also, an NPS visitor facility at this site that currently caters to guiding visitors to commercial services in the area would be out of context for the NPS.

Cumulative Impacts—There would be some long-term cumulative beneficial impacts from co-locating NPS visitor information with the existing PCIC from the standpoint of increasing the number of visitors coming into contact with NPS personnel and learning about the Riverway. However, the cumulative intensity of incorporating NPS visitor contact with the PCIC would be a moderate, long-term, adverse impact to visitor experience due to a loss of NPS identity at this site.

Conclusions—Alternative F would have moderate, long-term beneficial impact on increasing visibility of NPS visitor services to the public. However, this alternative would have moderate, long-term adverse impacts on general visitor experience related to both indoor educational exhibits and outdoor educational opportunities. Alternative F would also have moderate, long-term adverse impacts on St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility aesthetics as well as Riverway and community connectivity.

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5.8 Socioeconomics

5.8.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focused on direct impacts to the local economy from construction and the long-term operation of the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility. The relationship of NPS facilities and impact on local businesses and tourist facilities is also analyzed.

Basis of Analysis—

Local Economic Impacts—Impacts of the alternatives on local businesses in the St. Croix Falls, WI, and Taylors Falls, MN, area were evaluated.

Community Relationships—The impacts of each alternative on the role of the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility in community life were examined.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—There would be no noticeable change from the existing conditions in terms of community-business-Riverway interaction.
- **Minor**—Small changes in business activity would occur primarily in areas directly related to Riverway visitation and tourism. Community interaction would remain basically unchanged from current conditions.
- **Moderate**—Noticeable changes would occur in some sectors of local business related to construction and to visitation/tourism. Community-Riverway interactions would be somewhat modified.
- **Major**—Noticeable changes would occur in some sectors of local business related to construction and to visitation/tourism. Community-Riverway interactions would be noticeably modified.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Impacts would be primarily associated with construction-related activities.
 - **Long-Term**—Impacts would be associated with the location and operation of the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility.

5.8.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Alternative A would essentially continue the existing conditions regarding the location of the Riverway Headquarters, employee payrolls, construction employment, impacts (or lack thereof) on local tourism, and the ability of the NPS to participate in community life and events. This alternative would result in impacts that would be negligible in the short-term and minor and adverse in the long-term.

Cumulative Impacts—Over time, the Riverway Headquarters would become less of a factor in the local economy and in community life. Structural deterioration and deferred maintenance would preclude some plans to add staffing and generally make the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility less desirable to visit. The exhibits and educational opportunities at the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility would become less competitive with the other

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visitor and information centers in the immediate locality and thereby draw fewer visitors to the NPS facilities and to adjacent downtown areas.

Conclusion—Alternative A would have a negligible short-term impact and a minor, long-term adverse impact on local economic activity and community relations.

5.8.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Economic impacts associated with Alternative B would include a temporary increase in local construction work, staff relocation during renovation and the need to lease a temporary site during this time, and temporary disruption of visitor services at the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility resulting in short-term minor adverse impacts. However, these adverse impacts would only last as long as construction. Once the renovation is completed, impacts on the local economy would be little changed from existing conditions although if unique interactive educational exhibits are installed, there could be an increase in visitation and an associated increase in tourist traffic through downtown St. Croix Falls resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts to the local economy. Community relationships with downtown St. Croix Falls would remain, but an improved auditorium/conference area within the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility could increase usage of NPS facilities for community meetings and other events.

Cumulative Impacts—By maintaining the current Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility site in close proximity to downtown St. Croix Falls, this alternative would enhance and be enhanced by various plans of the City of St. Croix Falls. These plans (currently unfunded) are related to developing surrounding areas for visitors including purchasing property for RV camping north of the Riverway Headquarters site, extending the river trail through the site, developing city property for recreation adjacent to the south of the headquarters site, and revitalizing the historic downtown area immediately south of the headquarters site.

Conclusion—Alternative B would have a moderate, short-term beneficial impact on the local economy resulting from major renovation work and from temporary leasing of office space. There would be a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on local businesses and community life from this alternative since it would keep the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility at its present site and embedded within the community context of the City of St. Croix Falls.

5.8.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Economic impacts with Alternative C would be much the same as those described for Alternative B although construction/demolition work would be much more extensive and there would be no requirement to temporarily relocate NPS staff during construction of the new facility. The new facility would probably be an attraction in itself, and this alternative would maximize opportunities for the NPS to develop unique, interactive indoor and experiential outdoor educational exhibits and opportunities attractive to visitors resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts to the local economy. Meeting room and other facilities that could be shared with the community would be substantially enhanced with this alternative.

Cumulative Impacts—By remaining in the existing location, this alternative would have cumulative impacts similar to that described for Alternative B. However, the new facility with this alternative would possibly play an even greater synergistic role with various City of St. Croix Falls plans, thus drawing more visitors to the downtown area of St. Croix Falls.

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Conclusions—Alternative C would have a moderate, short-term beneficial impact on the local economy resulting from major construction and demolition work. There would be a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on local businesses and community life from this alternative since it would keep a highly enhanced Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility at its present site and embedded within the community context of the City of St. Croix Falls.

5.8.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Economic impacts associated with Alternative D would be associated with major construction and demolition activities would be short-term and moderate in intensity and adverse. However these potential impacts would only last as long as construction. The potential adverse impacts would be offset by short-term, beneficial impacts to the local economy from construction related income.. The new facility would provide new and unique indoor and outdoor interactive/experiential educational opportunities that could be an important new local attraction drawing visitors and tourist dollars to the area. The new facility would maintain a relationship with the City of St. Croix Falls by being located adjacent to Lion's Park. Locating so close to another park may have a beneficial impact on visitor experience. The Riverway and park would have similar land uses and prevent any visual intrusions that could result in siting the new contact facility next to other, less appropriate land uses. However, the close association with the historic downtown area would be reduced, even though visitor access to the new NPS facility still remain via SR 87 through downtown. Meeting room and other facilities that could be shared with the community would be substantially enhanced with this alternative. Locating this site adjacent to Lion's Park could result in an increase in noise levels in the immediate vicinity and a decrease in available parking areas due to increased traffic to the both sites. This could have a short- and long-term minor, adverse impact.

Cumulative Impacts—Alternative D would reduce the potential synergy between City of St. Croix Falls plans for the downtown area and the NPS facilities. However, the Indianhead Flowage site would provide an opportunity for close coordination with the city on future development of Lion's Park, which is a primary river access site. Currently, however, the City has no specific plans for enhancing or expanding existing facilities at Lion's Park.

Conclusions—Alternative D would have a moderate, short-term beneficial impact on the local economy resulting from major construction and demolition work. There would be a minor, long-term adverse impact on downtown businesses resulting from the new NPS facility being separated from downtown by more than a mile. This alternative would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on the possible joint city-NPS effort to enhance the attractiveness and recreational and educational potential of the Lion's Park area.

5.8.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—As with Alternatives C and D, Alternative E would create short-term, moderate beneficial impacts to the local economy related to major construction and demolition activities. However, construction-related activities would be in Minnesota rather than in Wisconsin. The new facility at the Heritage Coalition Site would be an attraction for visitors along a relatively busy state highway. The site would totally remove the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility from its historic connection with St. Croix Falls, WI, by locating the new facility in north Taylors Falls, MN. Relocating the facility in Taylors Falls would result in a moderate, long-term adverse economic impact on the City of St. Croix Falls, WI, and a concomitant moderate, long-term beneficial economic impact on the City of Taylor Falls, MN. This

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alternative would have a moderate, long-term adverse impact on community interaction with St. Croix Falls and a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on community interaction with Taylors Falls, MN.

Cumulative Impacts—Alternative E would preclude future interaction with the various development plans of the City of St. Croix Falls, WI. This alternative would also cumulatively reduce traffic through the older historic business district of St. Croix Falls, WI, by removing an existing visitor destination point north of downtown on SR 87. Alternative E would further enhance Minnesota efforts at developing the Gateway/St. Croix Valley Trail through the City of Taylors Falls, and would cumulatively increase traffic on SR 95 through downtown Taylors Falls. Due to existing congestion at the Highway 8 and Highway 95 intersection, Taylors Falls is least able to handle increased summer traffic that would result from placing the Visitor Center at this site. Cumulative impacts from this alternative in addition to other actions would be long-term, minor in intensity and adverse.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have an overall minor, short-term beneficial impact on the local economies of St. Croix Falls, WI, and Taylors Falls, MN, resulting from this alternative..

5.8.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—As with Alternative B, Alternative F would create short-term, beneficial economic impacts related to local construction work and temporary headquarters staff relocation. Interruption of visitor services could be avoided with this alternative if the new NPS facility at the PCIC was completed prior to renovation efforts at the existing Headquarters site. This alternative would enhance the knowledge of visitors about regional commercial tourist-based businesses by drawing additional visitors to the PCIC, which could result in minor long-term beneficial impacts to the local economy. At the same time, this alternative may contribute to drawing visitors away from downtown businesses in St. Croix Falls. As with Alternative B, this alternative would improve auditorium/conference facilities within the Riverway Headquarters facility, which could increase usage of NPS facilities for community meetings and other events.

Cumulative Impacts—Combining NPS visitor services with commercially related visitor information could have a cumulative beneficial impact on some regional businesses relying on tourism. Moving NPS visitor facilities away from the downtown area of St. Croix Falls would cumulatively contribute to reduced levels of business activity within the historic downtown area.

Conclusions—Alternative F would have a minor, short-term beneficial impact on local construction and office rental business. It would have a minor, long-term beneficial impact on regional commercial business dependent upon tourism, but it would have a moderate, long-term adverse impact on businesses in downtown St. Croix Falls, although this would be partially offset by providing community meeting space.

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5.9 Utilities and Energy

5.9.1 Methodology

Impact analysis focused on the availability of utilities to serve the Riverway Headquarters/ Visitor Contact Facility, the opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of the facilities, and the possibility of incorporating the use of energy from renewable resources into facility design.

Basis of Analysis—

Utility Availability/Energy Efficiency—Impacts are discussed in terms of what utilities are available and, if not currently provided at the site, the feasibility of providing them to the site. The efficiency of utilities based both on infrastructure and building design are also qualitatively examined.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible—**There would be no changes needed to modify or extend existing utility service lines or main lines. No measurable change would occur in levels of utility usage or energy efficiency.
- **Minor—**Modifications or installation of new service line connections would be required with no change in existing main lines located within current rights-of-way or easements. Minimal opportunities would be available to improve energy efficiency and/or decrease usage on non-renewable resources.
- **Moderate—**Modifications or installation of both new service lines and main lines would be required with no change in existing rights-of-way or easements. Some opportunity to improve energy efficiency and/or decrease usage of non-renewable resources would be available.
- **Major—**Modifications or installation of new service lines, main lines, and extensions of existing rights-of-way or acquisition of new easements would be required. Maximum opportunities for improving energy efficiency and/or use of renewable energy resources would be available.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term—**N/A.
 - **Long-Term—**All impacts on utilities would be long-term.

5.9.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—The No-Action Alternative with continuing utilization of the existing Riverway Headquarters facility allows continued usage of all available utilities at the present site within the corporation limits of the City of St. Croix Falls, WI. Inefficiencies, especially regarding the electrical systems within the existing building would continue to present not only operational constraints but also potential safety hazards. Periodic electrical outages would continue along with restrictions on simultaneous operation of certain electrical equipment. Water leakage through various lower level wall outlets would continue. With this alternative, the inefficiencies inherent in the design of the Headquarters building would continue, thus precluding improvements in energy conservation or the incorporation of alternative on-site active or passive energy systems resulting in short- and long-term minor impacts.

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Cumulative Impacts—A lack of substantial changes in building design would foreclose the potential to improve building energy efficiency and to incorporate alternative renewable energy sources to supplement building energy requirements. Higher energy use over the long-term would be the result.

Conclusions—This alternative would have a moderate short-term and long-term adverse impact on electrical service to the Headquarters facility. Alternative A would also have a minor, long-term adverse impact on energy efficiency.

5.9.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—As with the No-Action Alternative, Alternative B would allow continuing utilization of the existing Riverway Headquarters facility and usage of all available utilities at the present site within the corporation limits of the City of St. Croix Falls, WI. However, this alternative would include upgrading the current inadequate electrical system within the Riverway Headquarters facility. Other utility upgrades and improvements in building insulation and general operational efficiency would also be included in this alternative resulting in moderate long-term, beneficial impacts. Limited opportunities may also be found to incorporate active or passive energy systems into the remodeling effort to include supplemental water heating, use of photo-voltaics for on-site electrical generation, etc.

Cumulative Impacts—Alternative B would result in long-term improvements in utility service reliability and would open the possibility of incorporating supplementary, renewable energy sources into building design. Long-term, cumulative energy savings would be the result.

Conclusions—This alternative would have moderate, long-term beneficial impacts on the efficiency and safety of electrical systems within the existing Headquarters facility. Alternative B would also afford the opportunity to incorporate minor, long-term beneficial impacts on overall building operating efficiency and use of solar energy to supplement supplied electrical power.

5.9.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Alternative C would have the advantage of convenient access to existing utilities at the current Riverway Headquarters site as well as the advantage of designing a new and energy-efficient facility resulting in moderate, long-term, beneficial impacts on energy usage and utility service. Depending upon final design, the utility easement following Hamilton Street passing north-south through the existing site would be relocated and moved underground to make more room for new construction. Moving the new facility further to the east on the existing site would allow for improved southern exposure and greater potential for incorporating both passive and active solar energy generation capabilities. Better insulation, air flow control, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and other features reducing utility use would also be incorporated into the design of the new facility.

Cumulative Impacts—Alternative C would result in long-term, cumulative improvements in utility service reliability and energy savings. Depending on cooperation from the City of St. Croix Falls, WI; this alternative would also present an opportunity to move existing site utilities underground thus making them more reliable (e.g. less susceptible to storm damage). However, the City of St. Croix Falls has no plans to move or bury existing utility lines going through NPS

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property along Hamilton Street. The City would only consider this action in consultation and coordination with NPS, and would probably request NPS funding for any utility relocation.

Conclusions—Alternative C would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on utility service, efficiency of utility usage, and opportunity to incorporate alternative energy resources within the Riverway Headquarters facility.

5.9.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—Water and sanitary sewer service are not currently available at the Indianhead Flowage site, which is adjacent to the northern corporation limits of St. Croix Falls, WI. Electrical and telephone service is available from lines along SR 87. Construction of a new Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility at this site would require extension of water and sewer lines to the facility. The City of St. Croix Falls, WI, has indicated that it would consider sharing the cost of providing the necessary extensions of water and sewer lines if this location is selected. As with new construction at the existing Riverway Headquarters site (Alternative C), construction at the Indianhead Flowage Site would allow for building orientation to take advantage of southern exposure and greater potential for incorporating both passive and active solar energy generation capabilities. Better insulation, air flow control, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and other features reducing utility use would also be incorporated into the design of the new facility resulting in an overall moderate long-term benefit to energy and utility efficiency.

Cumulative Impacts—Alternative D would result in an opportunity to upgrade and extend utility service to Lion's Park facilities as well as to NPS facilities. Currently, the City has no independent plans to upgrade utilities in the Lion's Park vicinity. Any future extension of service would be coordinated with NPS and would, most likely, depend upon NPS funding. This alternative would provide long-term energy savings through better building design and improved building operational efficiency, as well as through incorporation of on-site supplementary energy sources.

Conclusions—Alternative D would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on water and sewer service since existing lines would need to be extended northward through Lion's Park to serve the new Riverway Headquarters. However, this same action would have moderate, long-term beneficial impact once service was established. This alternative would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on overall energy and other utility usage from the standpoint of various energy-conserving and energy-generating design features that would be incorporated into new construction.

5.9.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—There is no utility service available at the Heritage Coalition Site. The closest utilities serve a subdivision west of SR 95, which borders the west side of the Heritage Coalition Site. The City of Taylors Falls, MN, has indicated that they could not pay for extending utility services across SR 95 and into the Heritage Coalition Site. The known geology of this site would preclude use of a septic system or the drilling of a water well as possible alternatives to connecting to city-provided services resulting in short-term minor adverse impacts. However this alternative would provide maximum flexibility in building orientation to take advantage of passive and active solar power as well as wind power for some electrical generation resulting in moderate long-term beneficial impacts. Better insulation, air flow

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control, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, and other features reducing utility use would also be incorporated into the design of the new facility.

Cumulative Impacts—A possible cumulative impact from selection of Alternative E would be that utilities extended to the Heritage Coalition Site on the east side of SR 95 could encourage additional residential development north of the site. However, the City of Taylors Falls has no current plans to extend utility service to or through the Heritage Coalition site, and has indicated that any such extensions would be at NPS expense.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on utility connections in terms of the need for a fairly substantial extension of all utilities. This alternative would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on improving energy efficiency and reducing reliance on external sources of power for a new Headquarters facility. The site provides maximum possibilities for utilizing solar and wind power.

5.9.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—Alternative F would allow continuing utilization of the existing Riverway Headquarters facility and usage of all available utilities at the present site within the corporation limits of the City of St. Croix Falls, WI. All utilities are also available at the PCIC site and would require only minor service line modifications to accommodate the St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility addition. As with Alternative B, Alternative F would include upgrading the current inadequate electrical system within the Riverway Headquarters facility. Other utility upgrades and improvements in building insulation and general operational efficiency of the existing Headquarters facility would also be included in this alternative. Limited opportunities may also be found to incorporate active or passive energy systems into the remodeling effort to include supplemental water heating, use of photo-voltaics for on-site electrical generation, resulting in moderate long-term beneficial impacts. There would be little opportunity to incorporate alternative supplementary energy systems into the NPS visitor facility at the PCIC site.

Cumulative Impacts—Alternative F would result in long-term improvements in utility service reliability and would open the possibility of incorporating supplementary, renewable energy sources into the building design of the Headquarters Facility.

Conclusions—This alternative would have moderate, long-term beneficial impacts on the efficiency and safety of the electrical system within the existing Headquarters Facility. Alternative F would also afford the opportunity to incorporate minor, long-term beneficial impacts into overall Headquarters Facility operating efficiency and use of solar energy to supplement supplied electrical power.

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5.10 Transportation

5.10.1 Methodology

Basis of Analysis—

Transportation Access—Impacts are discussed in terms of the relationship of the possible Headquarters sites to the local roadway network. Issues of current or potential future multi-modal access via trails, bikeways, and the river itself are also evaluated.

Intensity, Duration and Type of Impact

- **Negligible**—There would be no noticeable change in roadway configurations, signage, parking, local traffic circulation, or modal connections with the Riverway Headquarters.
- **Minor**—Small changes in on-site roadway configurations, signage, and parking would take place with no changes in overall modal connections or connectivity with the St. Croix River.
- **Moderate**—Changes impacting local roadway configuration, parking, signage, and local traffic circulation would occur on-site and beyond the site with no changes in overall modal connections or connectivity with the St. Croix River.
- **Major**—Changes would occur impacting local roadway configuration, parking, signage, and local traffic circulation on site and beyond. Changes in multi-modal transportation access would possibly occur including changes in connectivity to the St. Croix River.
- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Occurring only during construction.
 - **Long-Term**—Permanent post-construction changes.

5.10.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—Vehicular access to the existing site would remain unchanged with this alternative. The somewhat cryptic design and location of the existing signage located at the SR 87 and Massachusetts Street intersection guiding visitors to the Headquarters would remain. The close connectivity of the Headquarters site with downtown St. Croix Falls, WI, would remain as would the future possibility of a hiking trail connection with a proposed trail from Interstate Park on the south to the Indianhead Flowage Trail to the north.

Cumulative Impacts—Future trail extension along the St. Croix River through St. Croix Falls as a reasonably foreseeable future action by the City would enhance multi-modal access to the Riverway Headquarters site. Development of the pedestrian trail in addition to taking no action would cumulatively result in a negligible impact to the overall transportation systems, although there would be minor long-term benefits to pedestrian connections.

Conclusions—Alternative A would have a negligible long-term impact on transportation systems. There would be a continuing lack of clear identification and signage guiding motorists from SR 87 to the Riverway Headquarters site.

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5.10.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—The existing roadways, parking areas, loading areas, etc. would remain unchanged at the Headquarters site. Some parking and on-site traffic disruption would occur during renovation due to the presence and staging of equipment resulting in minor, short-term adverse impacts. These potential impacts would last as long as construction. The existing signage located at the SR 87 and Massachusetts Street intersection, which guides visitors to the Headquarters would be improved to create a more visible “gateway” to the Riverway Headquarters. “Gateway signage” at the intersection of Massachusetts Street and SR 87 would be improved. The close connectivity of the Headquarters site with downtown St. Croix Falls, WI, would remain, as would the future possibility of a hiking trail connection with a proposed trail from Interstate Park on the south to the Indianhead Flowage Trail to the north.

Cumulative Impacts—Future trail extension along the St. Croix River through St. Croix Falls as a reasonably foreseeable future action by the City would enhance multi-modal access to the Riverway Headquarters site. Development of the pedestrian trail in addition to this alternative would cumulatively result in a minor short- and long-term beneficial impact to the overall transportation systems.

Conclusions—Alternative B would have a minor, long-term, beneficial impact by improving signage along SR 87 for motorists. This alternative would have the moderate, long-term beneficial impact of maintaining the headquarters in close proximity to the river and retaining the possibility of future trail connectivity.

5.10.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Current Site)

Analysis—Depending on the final design, Alternative C could change the travel patterns on the two residential streets providing access to the Riverway Headquarters resulting in short- and long-term moderate adverse impacts. One option would be to cul-de-sac Hamilton Street north of a new Riverway Headquarters building and enhancing the “gateway” to the site at SR 87 and Massachusetts Street as mentioned with Alternative B. Changing of street configurations would require close coordination with the City of St. Croix Falls and legal agreements concerning use of existing utility easements and right-of-way along Hamilton Street. There would be long-term moderate beneficial impacts to the safety of visitors to the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility if a cul-de-sac would be constructed on Hamilton Street, ending through-traffic within the Riverway Headquarters site. The close connectivity of the Headquarters site with downtown St. Croix Falls, WI, would remain as would the future possibility of a hiking trail connection with a proposed trail from Interstate Park on the south to the Indianhead Flowage Trail to the north.

Cumulative Impacts—If a cul-de-sac is constructed at the termination of Hamilton Street north of the Headquarters site, there would be long-term, cumulative impacts on traffic flow and vehicular access to residences along this street and adjacent streets. Future trail extension along the St. Croix River through St. Croix Falls as a reasonably foreseeable future action by the City would enhance multi-modal access to the Riverway Headquarters site. Development of the pedestrian trail in addition to this alternative would cumulatively result in a minor short- and long-term beneficial impact to the overall transportation systems.

Conclusions—Alternative C would have a minor, long-term adverse impact on traffic flow through the residential streets adjacent to the Riverway Headquarters site if there was construction of a cul-de-sac on Hamilton Street at the Riverway Headquarters. If the cul-de-sac

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was built, there would be a moderate, long-term beneficial effect on pedestrian safety at the Headquarters site. This alternative would have the moderate, long-term beneficial impact of maintaining the headquarters in close proximity to the river and retaining the possibility of future trail connectivity.

5.10.5 Alternative D (New Facility at Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—SR 87 would provide ready vehicular access to the Indianhead Flowage site. However, this site has little connectivity with downtown St. Croix Falls and is farther away from the intersection of US 8 and SR 87 on the south side of St. Croix Falls, the direction from which the majority of visitors arrive in the area. Therefore, it would not be a visible resource within the heart of the community. There is a possibility of developing shared parking at Lion's Park, which borders the south boundary of the Indianhead Flowage site. The Indianhead Flowage trail currently traverses the site and would provide connectivity with NPS and other sites to the north along the St. Croix Riverway. This alternative would increase traffic through residential neighborhoods north of downtown and the existing headquarters site, resulting in minor adverse impacts. Alternative D would also enhance connectivity related to recreational boating traffic and through-hikers on the Indianhead Flowage (Ice Age) Trail resulting in moderate, long-term beneficial impacts.

Cumulative Impacts—The possible relocation of the Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility to the Indianhead Flowage Site adjacent to Lion's Park with its boat launch facility could lead to additional commercial development and accompanying heavier local traffic during peak visitation months. However, the City of St. Croix Falls has no independent plans at this time to enhance facilities or increase visitation to Lion's Park.

Conclusions—This alternative would result in a minor, long-term adverse impact from increasing traffic through residential neighborhoods along SR 87 north of downtown St. Croix Falls. Alternative D would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on maintaining and enhancing connectivity to local and regional boating and hiking facilities.

5.10.6 Alternative E (New Facility at Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—SR 95 is a major north-south route for people from the more populated areas near Minneapolis/St. Paul to travel to various vacation and recreational sites farther north. Traffic congestion reportedly occurs along SR 95 during peak summer periods. Some type of traffic control along SR 95 would probably be necessary for safe entry and exit of visitors to a Riverway Headquarters site at this location. MnDOT indicates that a southbound left turn lane would be required on SR 95 at the Heritage Coalition Site entrance. MnDOT also indicated potential sight distance and grade problems could contribute to the accident potential at this site resulting in long-term, moderate adverse impacts. Some existing parking on the site could possibly be utilized for visitors or staff. The site is relatively isolated from any access to the river and there are currently no trail connections to the site. A future trail connection is being considered that could connect the site with Interstate Park to the south and Wild River Park to the north.

Cumulative Impacts—Any additional residential or commercial development north of downtown Taylors Falls would cumulatively add to adverse traffic impacts related to access on and off of SR 95 at the Heritage Coalition site. Encouragement of additional business activity in downtown Taylors Falls would also cumulatively add to summertime traffic congestion.

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Conclusions—Alternative E would have a moderate, long-term adverse impact on traffic safety in terms of vehicular access on and off of SR 95 at the Heritage Coalition Site entrance—especially during peak summer periods. Alternative E would have a moderate, long-term adverse impact on river accessibility from the Headquarters/St. Croix Falls Visitor Contact Facility.

5.10.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center and Renovation of Existing Headquarters Facility)

Analysis—Alternative F would have similar impacts on transportation issues at the existing Headquarters site as Alternative B. In the case of this alternative, gateway signage would be primarily for visitors arriving at the Headquarters site for business purposes since the visitor facility would be at the PCIC and remote from the Headquarters. This alternative would result in long-term minor beneficial impacts to the parking area at the Headquarters site. Location of NPS visitor facilities at the PCIC would increase traffic and parking congestion in the vicinity of the PCIC resulting in short- and long-term adverse impacts. Some increase in traffic mishaps in this area would be expected as a result of this. Some roadway modification in terms of turn lanes or other traffic control features may be required at the intersection of SR 35 and US 8. Future connectivity of the NPS visitor facility with Riverway trails would be foreclosed with Alternative F. However, this alternative would locate NPS facilities adjacent to an access point to the Gandy Dancer regional trail.

Cumulative Impacts—This alternative would have a long-term cumulative impact on increased traffic and parking congestion in the vicinity of the PCIC. Trailhead parking for access to the Gandy Dance Trail would also cumulatively contribute to parking and traffic congestion problems at the PCIC.

Conclusions—Alternative F would have a minor, long-term beneficial impact on traffic and parking at the Headquarters site. This alternative would have a minor to moderate, long-term adverse impact on traffic and parking congestion within the vicinity of the PCIC.

5.11 Riverway Operations

5.11.1 Methodology

Basis of Analysis—

Operational Efficiency—Efficiency of Headquarters staff operations would be impacted by changes in facility functioning, space utilization, administrative work area layout, storage, maintenance, etc.

Intensity, Duration, and Type of Impact:

- **Negligible**—There would be no noticeable change from existing conditions.
- **Minor**—Facility functioning in terms of indoor air quality, and system reliability would improve to some extent.
- **Moderate**—There would be substantial changes in terms of improved working conditions related to indoor air quality, office and storage space utilization and layout, and reduced maintenance.
- **Major**—Changes would be substantial in all areas of operational efficiency.

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- **Duration:**
 - **Short-Term**—Impacts lasting 5 years or less.
 - **Long-Term**—Impacts lasting 5 or more years.

5.11.2 Alternative A (No-Action Alternative)

Analysis—This alternative would maintain the status quo with routine maintenance or the employment of emergency measures such as remediation of indoor air quality problems. Staff morale would be adversely impacted by a continuation of mold and moisture problems as well as with inadequate office space, unreliable electrical service, etc. throughout the existing facility resulting in moderate, short-term and long-term adverse impact on Riverway operational efficiency.

Cumulative Impacts—Continued, long-term deterioration of the existing facility could eventually lead to its closure, which would create cumulative adverse impacts to visitors and Riverway operations.

Conclusions—This alternative would have a moderate, short-term and long-term adverse impact on Riverway operational efficiency.

5.11.3 Alternative B (Remodel Existing Facility)

Analysis—Alternative B would result in major interior renovation work to improve all building systems from HVAC to lighting, interior spaces would be changed to improve office functioning, the building would be structurally strengthened and foundation work would be accomplished to eliminate the groundwater problems. However, overall interior square footage would not be expanded resulting in short- and long-term moderate adverse impacts to Riverway operations. Also, the storage facility north of Hamilton Street would not be changed. Staff would need to relocate during the major renovation.

Cumulative Impacts—Many long-term problems resulting from crowding and inadequate office/work space within the existing facility would continue after renovation.

Conclusions—Alternative B would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on staff operational efficiency during the period when relocation would be necessary. This alternative would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on operational efficiency. However, gains in efficiency would be constrained by the size and original construction of the Headquarters building.

5.11.4 Alternative C (New Facility at Existing Site)

Analysis—Alternative C would result in construction of an entirely new facility on the current Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility property. This alternative would provide maximum opportunity to incorporate the latest in sustainable building technology within a modern, new facility specifically designed for NPS functions and requirements. Only one staff move would be required from the existing facility to the new facility resulting in moderate, long-term beneficial impacts..

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Cumulative Impacts—Efficiency and morale would be maximized over the long term resulting in less staff turnover and more NPS program continuity

Conclusions—This alternative would have a moderate, short-term and long-term beneficial impact on Riverway operational efficiency. The new facility would be designed to accommodate documented NPS requirements for staff, storage, curation, and general building operations and security.

5.11.5 Alternative D (Indianhead Flowage Site)

Analysis—As with Alternative C, this alternative would result in construction of an entirely new facility. This alternative would provide maximum opportunity to incorporate the latest in sustainable building technology within a modern, new facility specifically designed for NPS functions and requirements. Improvements in the ability of staff to deliver visitor service in terms of outdoor education would be greatly enhanced at this location. As with Alternative C, only one staff move would be required resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts. This location would require a minimal longer commute for some NPS staff.

Cumulative Impacts—Efficiency and morale would be maximized in the long term resulting in less staff turnover and more NPS program continuity.

Conclusions—Alternative D would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on Riverway operational efficiency through provision of a new facility specifically designed for NPS requirements.

5.11.6 Alternative E (Heritage Coalition Site)

Analysis—As with Alternatives C and D, this alternative would result in construction of an entirely new facility. This alternative would provide maximum opportunity to incorporate the latest in sustainable building technology within a modern, new facility specifically designed for NPS functions and requirements resulting in long-term, moderate beneficial impacts. However, efficiency would be reduced to some extent because of the remote location of this site from the Riverway itself. This would require more driving on the part of staff members and results in reduced NPS visibility immediately along the river. Improved ability of staff to conduct outdoor education would also be limited at this site. Only one staff move would be required with this alternative.

Cumulative Impacts—The NPS visibility/presence along the river would be indefinitely diminished resulting in fewer visitors benefiting from an NPS perspective of Riverway stewardship. Efficiency and morale would be maximized in the long term resulting in less staff turnover and more NPS program continuity.

Conclusions—Alternative E would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on Riverway operational efficiency. The more remote location of this site from the Riverway would be a detriment.

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5.11.7 Alternative F (Polk County Information Center)

Analysis—This alternative would split the visitor functions from the headquarter functions thereby reducing staff efficiencies. Additionally, the addition to the PCIC would be limited in square footage and would be insufficient for any substantial storage or use in curation, etc. There would be a need for a considerable amount of driving between the headquarters site and the PCIC resulting in long-term, moderate adverse impacts. The Headquarters facility improvements would also be limited as described in Alternative B. Staff relocation during renovation of the existing building would be necessary.

Cumulative Impacts—Many long-term problems resulting from crowding and inadequate office/work space within the existing facility would continue after renovation. Staff would indefinitely continue spending additional time commuting between the headquarters and the PCIC.

Conclusions—This alternative would have a moderate, short-term adverse impact on Riverway operational efficiency due to temporary staff relocation. It would have a moderate, long-term beneficial impact on headquarters staff operations, but would have a moderate, long-term adverse impact on the ability of NPS staff to deliver services and educational opportunities to visitors.

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6.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

6.1 Public Involvement

On October 11, 2001 NPS notified local, state, and federal representatives, as well as the general public, of an upcoming scoping meeting regarding the proposed construction of a new facility. The press release gave a brief description of the proposed plans and included the location, date, and times of the two public meetings to be held on October 24, 2001, at Riverway Headquarters. Comments were recorded from those meetings and complied along with comments that had been mailed to NPS. The responses were from a wide variety of individuals including local citizens and state and federal public servants.

All of the comments have been compiled into Appendix A: Public Involvement, but a summary of the responses appears below:

- The City of Taylor's Falls voiced support for the project, but stressed that it would back any program that best suited that national, regional, and local needs of visitors.
- Congressman James Oberstar, State Senator Twyla Ring, and State Representative Loren Jennings all supported the Taylor's Falls site and believed that this site would have a beneficial impact to the local economy.
- The City of Prescott hoped to build a partnership with the Riverway because it would correspond directly to some of their planning activities, including a proposed childcare center.
- Other local residents supported the use of the existing site based upon its remarkable opportunities for birding and the aesthetic value of the current site.
- The two public meetings generated a number of comments that ranged from the economics involved in this proposal to specific questions regarding use, safety concerns, and site amenities.

6.2 Agency Coordination

On March 18, 2002 NPS sent letters to 30 agencies requesting comments on the proposed new Riverway Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility. The letter explained the proposal and each alternative while detailing the goals of constructing and operating a new facility. It also included a map of the area and possible sites for the new facility. Four responses to this letter were received from various agencies including the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Comments ranged from recommending a comprehensive cultural resources survey be completed for the Minnesota site, a clear delineation within the report of state highway access points in Wisconsin, the need to obtain appropriate permits from both the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation (depending upon the chosen site), and specific concerns regarding the Indianhead Flowage site. Complete documentation of these comments can be found throughout Appendix B.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
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APPENDICES

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS (OCTOBER 24, 2001, ST. CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY)

Listed below are comments from recent public meetings regarding National Park Service (NPS) plans to either remodel or construct a new headquarters/visitor contact facility for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Whenever possible, the participants questions were answered during the meeting. It is important to note that this listing of comments is not entirely complete; there were moments when several people were speaking at once, or the flow of conversation was occurring too rapidly to be transcribed. The comments below are organized according to those raised during the first meeting, then the second meeting.

Comments from Meeting I: October 24, 2001, Number of Participants: 3

- What is required to remodel the existing facility?
- Has NPS looking into acquiring any properties adjacent to the existing facility?
- One participant felt that the existing site was the best one for a new facility.
- There was a sentiment that moving the facility away from the river would detract from the Riverway's image and mission.
- Problems with the Indianhead Flowage Site that were identified by the public included possible drainage problems and a perception that it might be too far from town.
- Some participants felt that the Heritage Coalition site was the best one and that if it was not used than the property should be used in some way.
- A possible detractor to the current site was the noise levels from nearby traffic.
- What are the economic impacts from a new facility on the region?
- What would be the cost of an elevator (Answer: between \$60,000 to \$80,000)?
- Does NPS funding place restrictions on development locations?
- What are the funding issues involved in selecting a site?
- One participant questioned how much of a need NPS had for constructing a visitor contact facility and wondered if NPS was functioning more out of government bureaucracy rather than real need.
- The design team was asked what other projects they had worked on.

Comments from Meeting II: October 24, 2001, Number of Participants: 6

- The City of Taylors Falls had a number of comments regarding the site possibility in their area. Below is a short list of those comments:
 - Taylors Falls would like NPS to choose the best site for their needs and to keep the competition between St. Croix Falls and Taylors Falls friendly.
 - The Heritage site is the chief scenic overlook for Taylor's Falls; the city donated the land for the Heritage site.
 - Taylor's Falls would like to see the Heritage site developed for public use in perpetuity.
 - There is potential for sewer services at the Heritage site from Taylors Falls.
 - There are plans and existing residential development to the north and west of the Heritage site.
 - Vegetation currently blocks the view to the river at the Heritage site.
 - The City of Taylors Falls has been discussing numerous plans for such things as downtown revitalization, one-way traffic, a tie in from the riverwalk to existing trails,

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY


creation of a pedestrian walkway across I-80, and many more. They did acknowledge that the Taylors Falls intersection creates a bottleneck to the area west of the bridge.

- Other comments from participants included the following:
 - The Heritage Coalition began in 1987 with the mission of “telling the story” of settlement with the St. Croix Valley.
 - If the Heritage Site were chosen the participants would like to see that the site remained mostly open and “prairie like.” They would also prefer that the development be held back from the edge so as not to be evident from the Wisconsin side of the river.
 - The Department of Natural Resources is also looking for a site to develop.
 - The area between Lion’s Park and the Indianhead Flowage Site, could be used for additional purposes.
 - A question was raised about the selection process. If a site is selected and eventually cannot be used is there an alternative site?
- The City of St. Croix Falls had the following comments:
 - Additional property, south of the existing site, may be available. The City is in the process of speaking with the owners.
 - St. Croix Falls is looking into purchasing 6 acres adjacent to the existing site and connecting that parcel with biking trails, the existing site, and the commercial district.
 - Water and sewer extension to the Indianhead Flowage site would not be a problem. The City would extend their current lines.
 - St. Croix Falls completed a river overlook dock last year. It has had good attendance and the City has plans to build a new bandshell.
 - There are plans to complete a downtown revitalization process that would include brick pavers for the crosswalks, trash receptacles, street lighting, and a face lift to give the town a more historical appearance.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

Saint Croix National Scenic River (NPS) - News and Events

Page 1 of 1



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Saint Croix National Scenic River

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Release Date: 10/11/01
Contact Name: Ron Erickson 715/483-3284 x628

10/12/01 Public Comment Sought

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT FOR RIVERWAY HEADQUARTERS PLAN

The National Park Service invites the public to participate in planning for a new headquarters facility for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway) at two open houses on October 24. The open houses will be held from 3:30-5:00 and 7:00-8:30 at Riverway Headquarters in St. Croix Falls. Open houses will start with a review of the proposed sites, the criteria to be used in evaluating sites, what type of facility will be built, and a description of the planning process. Participants in the meeting will have the opportunity to make statements to the entire group, or talk individually with project planners. Written statements will also be accepted.

Four locations for the new facility have been proposed in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin and Taylors Falls, Minnesota. A 12,500 square foot headquarters facility would include offices for Riverway staff, an information center with information about river recreation, space for school programs, and exhibits about the St. Croix Watershed. Congress has appropriated money for planning the facility, but has not appropriated the \$4,000,000 that would be needed to build the facility.

The existing headquarters facility in St. Croix Falls is in poor condition and is in need of extensive repairs. It has multiple code and accessibility problems, and does not meet the needs of the Riverway.

For more information about the open houses, please call the National Park Service at 715-483-3284. Written comments may be sent to Superintendent, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, P.O. Box 708, St. Croix Falls, WI, 54024.

###

The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was established as one of the original eight rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. For 252 miles the St. Croix River and its tributary, the Namekagon, flow through some of the most scenic and least developed country in the Upper Midwest. The last 25 miles of the St. Croix before its confluence with the Mississippi provides outstanding boating, sailing, and scenery on the edge of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a part of the National Park System.

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10/16/2001

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

CITISAGO COUNTY PRESS

10/18/01

Public comment sought for Riverway Headquarters plan

The National Park Service invites the public to participate in planning for a new headquarters facility for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway) at two open houses, Oct. 24. The open houses will be held from 3:30-5 p.m. and 7-8:30 p.m. at Riverway Headquarters in St. Croix Falls. Open houses will start with a review of the proposed sites, the criteria to be used in evaluating sites, what type of facility will be built, and a description of the planning process. Participants in the meeting will have the opportunity to make statements to the entire group, or talk individually with project planners. Written statements will also be accepted.

Four locations for the new facility have been proposed, in St. Croix Falls, Wis. and Taylors Falls, Minn. A 12,500 square foot headquarters facility would include offices for Riverway staff, an information center with information about river recreation, space for school programs, and exhibits about the St. Croix Watershed. Congress has appropriated money for planning the facility, but has not appropriated the \$4 million that would be needed to build the

facility.

The existing headquarters facility in St. Croix Falls is in poor condition and is in need of extensive repairs. It has multiple code and accessibility problems, and does not meet the needs of the Riverway.

For more information about the open houses, please call the National Park Service at 715-483-3284. Written comments may be sent to Superintendent, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, P.O. Box 708, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024.

++++

The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was established as one of the original eight rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. For 252 miles the St. Croix River and its tributary, the Namekagon, flow through some of the most scenic and least developed country in the upper Midwest. The last 25 miles of the St. Croix, before its confluence with the Mississippi, provides outstanding boating, sailing, and scenery on the edge of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a part of the National Park System.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

INTERCOUNTY LEADER 10/17/2001

Public comment sought for Riverway headquarters plan

The National Park Service invites the public to participate in planning for a new headquarters facility for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway at two open houses on Oct. 24. The open houses will be held from 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. and 7-8:30 at Riverway Headquarters in St. Croix Falls. Open houses will start with a review of the proposed sites, the criteria to be used in evaluating sites, what type of facility will be built, and a description of the planning process. Participants in the meeting will have the opportunity to make statements to the entire group, or talk individually with project planners. Written statements will also be accepted.

Four locations for the new facility have been proposed in St. Croix Falls, and Taylors Falls, Minn. A 12,500-square-foot headquarters facility would

include offices for Riverway staff, an information center with information about river recreation, space for school programs, and exhibits about the St. Croix Watershed. Congress has appropriated money for planning the facility, but has not appropriated the \$4,000,000 that would be needed to build the facility.

The existing headquarters facility in St. Croix Falls is in poor condition and is in need of extensive repairs. It has multiple code and accessibility problems, and does not meet the needs of the Riverway.

For more information about the open houses, please call the National Park Service at 715-483-3284. Written comments may be sent to Superintendent, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, P.O. Box 708, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

CLERK-TREASURER. ZA
Jo Everson
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Jayna Yeske
PUBLIC WORKS SUPERVISOR
Mike Kriz



MAYOR
Loren Caneday
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Ross Rivard
John Tangen
Steve Gall
Sam Dresser

CITY OF TAYLORS FALLS

July 11, 2001

Anthony Andersen, Superintendent
Kevin Baumgard, Facility Manager
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
P.O. Box 708
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

Dear Tony and Kevin,

After thirty years of service on the St. Croix Wild and Scenic Riverway, the National Park Service is in need of new facilities that will serve as headquarters. Several locations in Wisconsin and Minnesota are being considered in the site selection process. The City of Taylors Falls, in cooperation with the Heritage Coalition, has presented the Heritage Coalition's overlook site as a possible location for the new accommodations.

In the spirit of cooperation with the City of St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, the City of Taylors Falls, Minnesota, offers its support for the selection of a new site based upon the merits of the location that best serves the needs of the St. Croix Wild and Scenic Riverway. We believe it is appropriate, practical and prudent to locate the new headquarters near the juncture of the upper and lower portions of the Riverway. We also recognize the regional and national character of the St. Croix and the need to consider those factors in the site selection process. The needs of the tourists, visitors and users of the river should be considered paramount while choosing a site rather than the needs or desires of political subdivisions such as municipalities and states. Therefore the City of Taylors Falls will support the selection of the site that best suits the national, regional and local needs of the visitors who frequent this beautiful river valley.

The Cities of Taylors Falls and St. Croix Falls have worked diligently and jointly to preserve and enhance the treasured beauty of the St. Croix within our jurisdictions and regionally from blighting intrusions of power lines, cell towers and other distractions. We recognize the need and desire for technology, but fight hard to ensure that it is blended into the valley to preserve its historic and scenic quality. To this end, we commit our City once again to support what is best for the valley and the region.

We look forward to continued conversation as this project progresses.

Sincerely,

Loren Caneday, Mayor

Sent To
City Council
Date 7/23/01

c Senator Herb Kohl
Senator Russ Feingold
Congressman David Obey
Congressman Ron Kind

Senator Paul Wellstone
Senator Mark Dayton
Congressman Jim Oberstar
Congressman Bill Luther

637 First Street • Taylors Falls, Minnesota 55084-1144
(651) 465-5133 • Fax (651) 465-4603
e-mail: cfaleak@canet.com

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

APR. 24. 2001 3:40PM

REP OBERSTAR

NO. 0958

P. 2/2 OFFICES:

JAMES L. OBERSTAR
8TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

2365 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2308
(202) 225-6211
FAX: (202) 225-0699
www.house.gov/oberstar

COMMITTEE:
RANKING DEMOCRAT:
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

April 24, 2001

BRAINERD CITY HALL
501 LAUREL STREET
BRAINERD, MN 56401
(218) 828-4400

CHISHOLM CITY HALL
316 LAKE STREET
CHISHOLM, MN 55719
(218) 254-5781

231 FEDERAL BUILDING
DULUTH, MN 55802
(218) 727-7474

ELK RIVER CITY HALL
13065 ORONO PARKWAY
ELK RIVER, MN 55330
(612) 241-0188

Mr. Anthony Andersen
Superintendent
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
401 North Hamilton Street, Box 708
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024

Dear Superintendent Andersen:

I am writing to request that you consider the City of Taylors Falls, Minnesota, as the site for the proposed St. Croix National Scenic Riverway visitor center and park headquarters.

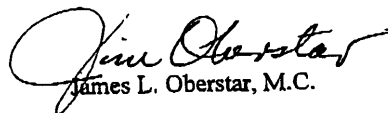
Taylors Falls is an impressive city that enjoys a harmonious relationship with the St. Croix River. Locating the center and new headquarters in Taylors Falls would not only provide 20 good paying jobs, it would also provide tangible incentives for Main Street renewal and economic development.

I understand that there are state, county, and city land acquisition partnership opportunities for a modern and accessible center in Minnesota. I want you to know that you have my strong support for federal funding to build the Riverway's headquarters on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River.

Please recognize and consider the plans, proposals, and actions of the Taylors Falls community leaders as you discuss further development plans.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,


James L. Oberstar, M.C.

JLO/adp

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

27-Apr-2001 07:55am From-MN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

6512964165

T-335 P.002/002 F-364

Loren G. Jennings
State Representative
District 18B
Chisago and Pine Counties



**Minnesota
House of
Representatives**

April 27, 2001

Wade Vitalis
Taylors Falls Economic Development Commission
City Hall
Taylors Falls, MN 55084

Dear Wade:

It has come to my attention that the St. Croix Scenic Riverway National Park Service Headquarters is considering moving. The location siting process has started and there is interest in moving to Minnesota. I am familiar with the location in Minnesota known as the Scenic Overlook at the Heritage Coalition site and feel it would be a wonderful spot to locate the St. Croix Scenic Riverway Headquarters.

I am sorry I can't attend your meeting because of legislative session this morning, but this project has my strong support.

The Commission could partner with Congressman Oberstar in any way possible and be willing to discuss possible partnerships with the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation with some facility sharing possibilities.

Again, I am sorry I can't attend this meeting but I am very interested in the project moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Loren Jennings".

Loren Jennings
State Representative

3340 465th St., Harris, Minnesota 55032

State Office Building, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-1298

House Fax (651) 296-4165 TTY (651) 296-9896

(651) 674-7538

(651) 296-0518



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

FROM : RING-FOR-SENATE

FAX NO. : 6516747817

Apr. 26 2001 10:54PM P2

TWYLA RING

Senator District 18
Room 306 State Capitol
75 Constitution Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
Phone: (651) 296-6419
Fax: (651) 296-6511
E-mail: sen.twyla.ring@senate.leg.state.mn.us

8500 285th Avenue NE
North Branch, MN 56056
Phone: (651) 674-7817



Senate

State of Minnesota

April 27, 2001

TO: Anthony Andersen, superintendent
St. Croix Wild/Scenic Riverway

RE: Relocation of headquarters

I write to urge relocation of the proposed headquarters to the Minnesota side of the river, specifically to the north overlook in Taylors Falls. This site has got to be a marriage made in heaven for your agency, for tourists and taxpayers and, with its visibility, for boaters on the beautiful St. Croix. Surely Taylors Falls is one of the most lovely and historically significant cities on the riverway.

Not only is the proposed site appropriately located where the upper and lower St. Croix meet, but also the site has already enjoyed improvements that will certainly complement your endeavor.

I have no doubt that there will be a great deal of support for the project. As the senator representing this area, I will lend my personal support to help funding efforts and to serve in whatever way I can.

Duty calls me to the Senate floor today, and I regret that I cannot attend your meeting. However, my assistant Joe Briseno will be there and take good notes. Please do not hesitate to call me with information or questions.

Sincerely,

Sen. Twyla Ring
District 18



COMMITTEES: Vice Chair of Agriculture, General Legislation and Veterans Affairs • Environment and Natural Resources • Environment and Agriculture Budget Division • Health and Family Security • Finance • Chair of Subcommittee on Public Lands and Waters • Subcommittee on Fish and Wildlife

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

6-14-02:11:23AM; USDI-NPS

:715 483 3288

2/ 3



CITY OF PRESCOTT

800 Borner Street North • Prescott, Wisconsin 54021-2012

(715) 262-5544

XC:Ron

October 19, 2001

Superintendent
St Croix National Scenic Riverway
P.O. 708
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

Dear Sir or Madam:

I read with interest the plans for a new St Croix Scenic Riverway Headquarters. As Prescott is in the process of building a Learning Center focused on the Mississippi River Watershed and the Great River Road, there is an obvious link between the facilities. Please keep us informed as to your progress.

I also noted that you have yet to have the money appropriated for your project. Prescott's Center has received one grant for the Learning Center project and was verbally assured of at least two more grants to finish the project. The last Scenic Byways Appropriation was earmarked for projects which had not even made applications for Scenic Byway funding, and we, along with others have been in a letter writing campaign to get the Committee to honor their assurances to allow the completion of projects already underway. With the current state of world affairs, the end result is uncertain.

We wish you every success with obtaining your funding appropriation.

Sincerely,

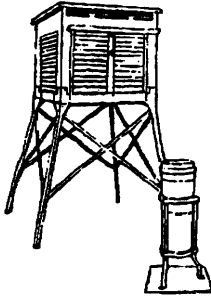
Lloyd R. Matthes
City Administrator

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

6-14-02;11:23AM; USD1-NPS

1715 483 3288

3/ 3



NOV 21 2001

Nov. 20, 2001
Chicago City MN

Dear Superintendent of St. Croix Nat Scenic Riverway
The purpose of this letter is to express my opinion on the
new Park Headquarters.

In the past my wife and I have used the present
headquarters many times. We liked to show off the natural
features of our area to our Birding friends and this included
a visit to your building with all your great displays and movie.

Each year I do some birding trail hikes for Wild Liver State Park
and I like to encourage my group to stop off at your Headquarters
while they visit our area.

Our opinion is that it should stay in the St Croix,
Taylor's Falls area due to closeness to our many schools,
the well traveled U.S. 8 and the Historic Value of the Falls.

We really did like the old, present site a lot - but we
do see the need for a new one - but still in the same
general area.

I do know No. Branch Chamber of Commerce uses you as another
item of interest to their Visitors packet as I worked with them on
it. Also your Weather station is just 18 miles NE of mine
so I compare yearly and monthly totals.

Thank you very much. Sincerely.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

AGENCY COORDINATION

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

Agency Coordination List

1. Steve Johnson, Community Stewardship Supervisor, MDNR Waters
2. Larry Buchholz, Manager, Minnesota Interstate Park
3. Rich Bruns, Manager, Wild River State Park, MN
4. Molly Shodeen, Area Hydrologist, MDNR
5. Joel Stedman, Interpretive Operations Coordinator, MDNR, St. Paul
6. Chuck Kartak, Regional Parks Operations Supervisor, Brainerd, MN
7. CB Bylander, Regional Director, MDNR, Brainerd, MN
8. Mike Mueller, Area Hydrologist, MDNR, Cambridge, MN
9. Calvin Kontola, Manager, Afton State Park, MN
10. Jack Nelson, Manager, St. Croix State Park, MN
11. Paul Kooiker, Manager, Governor Knowles State Forest, WI
12. Rick Arnebeck, Area Manager, MN DOT
13. Marc Hershfield, Environmental Coordinator, WI DOT
14. Jeff Krueger, Manager, Wisconsin Interstate Park
15. Terry Moe, Lower St. Croix Team Manager, WI DNR
16. Eunice Post, Water Regulations and Zoning Specialist, WI DNR, Baldwin
17. Dan Harrington, Water Management Specialist, WI DNR, Cumberland
18. Dan Seemon, Environmental Specialist, Army Corps of Engineers, MN
19. Nick Rowse, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, Bloomington, MN
20. Steve Jenson, Water Quality Specialist, St. Croix Chippewa Indians of WI
21. James Stark, Hydrologist, USGS, MN
22. Bill Franz, Team Manager, EPA, IL
23. John Hensel, Supervisor, Metro Region, MPCA, MN
24. Jerry Chasteen, Executive Director, West Central WI Reg. Planning Commission, WI
25. Dan Stinnett, Field Supervisor, USFWS, MN
26. Dennis Gimmestad, Compliance Officer, MN SHPO
27. Richard Bernstein, Historian, WI SHPO
28. Bill Clark, Environmental Impact Coordinator, WI DNR, Spooner (mailed 3/27/02)
29. Pam Rasmussen, Permitting Analyst & Commissioner, Upper St. Croix Mgmt.
Commission, Xcel Energy, Eau Claire, WI (mailed on 3/28/02)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
401 Hamilton Street
P.O. Box 708
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin 54024-0708

RECEIVED
MAR 22 2002
WOOLPERT LLP

March 18, 2002

D34(SACN)

Re: Early Agency Coordination, Environmental Assessment for the Project "Construct Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility" St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to site, design, and construct a new Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway in the vicinity of St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin. In accordance with NPS Director's Order and Handbook 12 (*Conservation Planning and Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision Making*) implementing the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations in 40 CFR 1500-1508, we are requesting your initial comments on this proposed action.

The current NPS Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility, located just north of downtown St. Croix Falls, is a converted restaurant/motel originally constructed in 1967, which has many serious design and operational deficiencies. Key deficiencies include inadequate office, laboratory and storage space; groundwater seepage and foundation settling; rainwater leakage, moisture and mold problems; an inadequate electrical system; overstressed framing; and accessibility issues.

The primary goal of the siting, design, and construction of a new NPS Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility would be to eliminate the aforementioned deficiencies of the existing facility. In addition, the new facility should provide:

- Adequate curatorial space for museum collections.
- Room for possible future expansion.
- State-of-the-art design for energy efficiency.
- An example of sustainable design and construction.
- Support for community goals.
- Easy access from a major highway.
- A strong connection to the St. Croix River.
- Outdoor classroom space.
- Easy connectivity to utilities.
- Adequate loading dock for deliveries.
- A design that minimizes visual impact of facility on river valley scenery.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

The approximate square footage of the proposed facility dedicated to each function would be as follows:

- Headquarters 10,000
- Visitor Contact Facility..... 2,500
- Loading/supply 600

Construction would also include a 60-car (approximately 18,000 square-feet bituminous) parking area, utilities, landscaping, and site work. The two-story building would meet NPS sustainability standards and would be designed to showcase energy efficiency.

A Planning and Design Team consisting of NPS staff and consultants met at St. Croix Falls in October 2001 to review the existing conditions at the NPS Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility and to conduct a preliminary assessment of alternative approaches and possible sites for a new facility. The following six preliminary options on four sites were identified:

1. No action on the existing site.
2. Remodeling the existing facility.
3. Constructing a new facility on the existing site.
4. Constructing a new facility at the NPS Indianhead Flowage site (one mile north of downtown St. Croix Falls adjacent to the north end of Lion's Park).
5. Constructing a new facility at the Heritage Coalition site (valley overlook one mile north of downtown Taylors Falls along Minnesota SR 95).
6. Constructing a new Visitor Contact Facility adjacent to the Polk County Information Center (at the intersection of Wisconsin SR 35 and US 8) and a new Headquarters on one of the other sites.

The enclosed map shows the general locations of these sites.

Please review this information and provide me with any comments, recommendations, or issues you may have. Questions may be referred to Ron Erickson at 715-483-3284, ext. 628. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Thomas A. Bradley
Superintendent

Enclosures (2)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

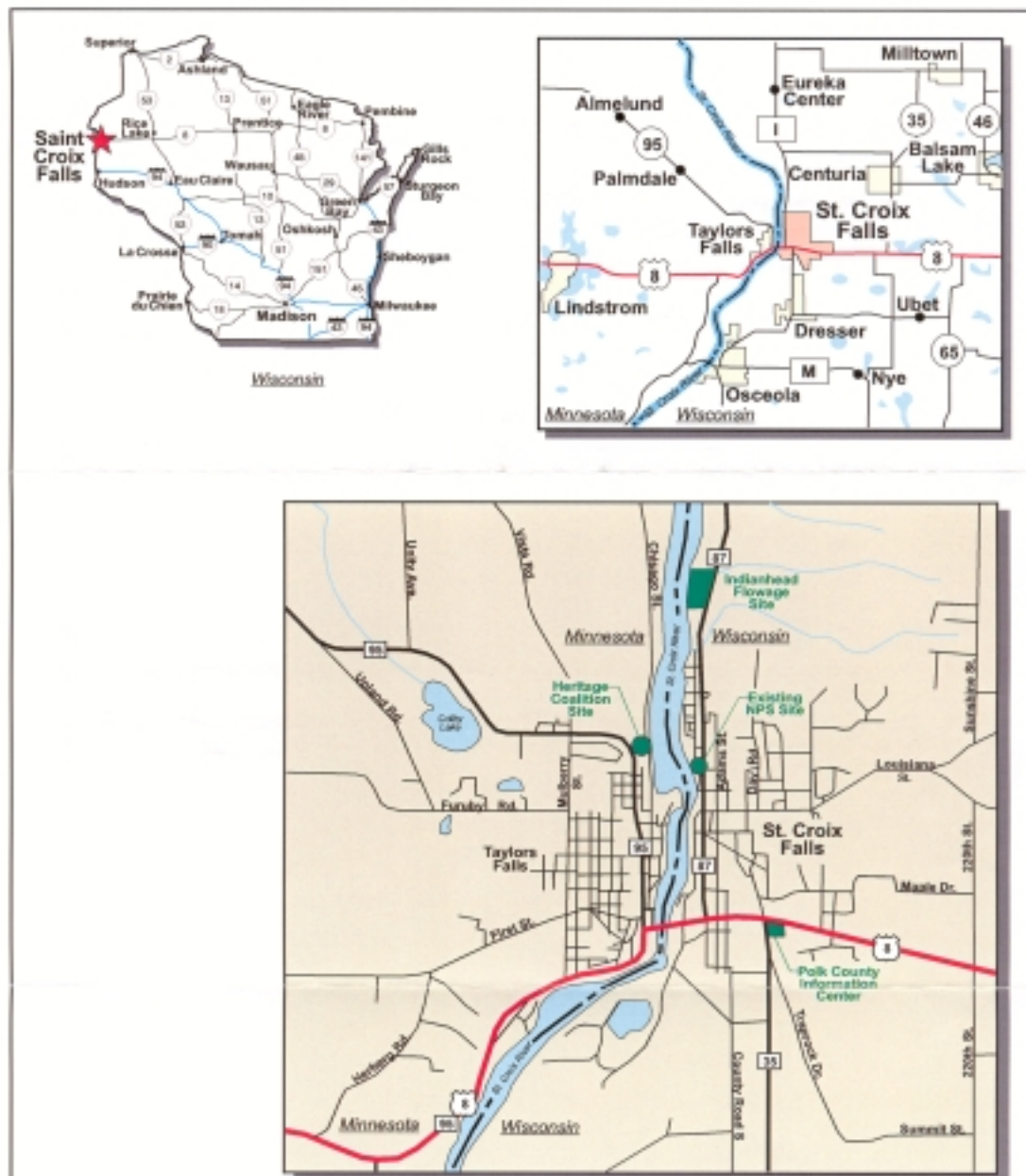


Figure 1

**Location, Vicinity and Possible Sites
for New National Park Service Facilities**
**St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Headquarters/Visitor Center**
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

5- 7-02; 2:37PM; USDI-NPS

:715 483 3288

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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

xc: Ron
OpanS.

April 19, 2002

Mr. Thomas A. Bradley
National Park Service
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
401 Hamilton Street
PO Box 708
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024-0708

RE: Possible new National Park Service Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility – St. Croix
National Scenic Riverway
T34 R19 S24, Chisago County
SHPO Number: 2002-1992

Dear Mr. Bradley:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

We recommend that a comprehensive cultural resources survey be completed for the proposed site in Minnesota, and look forward to working with you in reviewing the results.

Contact us at 651-296-5462 with questions or concerns. Please refer to the SHPO Number above in any correspondence.

Sincerely,

Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

5- 7-02; 2:37PM; USDI-NPS

; 715 483 3288

3

4/11/02

Voice Mail from Mark Hirschfield, Environmental Coordinator, Wisconsin DOT,
Superior Wisconsin: 715-392-7834 - *TO: RON ERIKSON*

He is the person that coordinates environmental review and should be our
contact with WDOT.

He routed early coordination letter to staff.

WDOT is concerned about access points to state highways and would like to see
proposal.

WDOT would need to issue a permit for highway access.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

5- 7-02; 2:37PM; USD1-NPS

:715 483 3288

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Minnesota Department of Transportation

Metropolitan Division
Waters Edge
1500 West County Road B2
Roseville, MN 55113

April 19, 2002

Tara Flaherty
Chisago County
313 N. Main Street, Rm 243
Center City, MN 55012-9663

Subject: NPS Headquarters Siting--Mn/DOT Review # STUDY02-003
East of Trunk Highway 95 and North of County State Aid Highway 16
Taylors Falls, Chisago County
Control Section 1306

Dear Ms. Flaherty:

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) has reviewed the above referenced study for siting the NPS Headquarters. Before any further development, please address the following issues:

- Access to Trunk Highway 95 at the existing Scenic Overlook is less than desirable due to combined horizontal and vertical curves limiting site distances. Turning movements and the ability to attain higher speeds at this location may be difficult due to the steep grade, creating the potential for accidents with increased traffic. The construction of a southbound left turn lane would be required at this location. The improvements to the Trunk Highway are development driven therefore the construction and associated costs of these improvements are the responsibility of the developer and/or the City. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Wayne Lemaniak (651-634-2147) in Mn/DOT's Traffic section.
- The proposed development will need to maintain existing drainage rates (i.e., the rate at which storm water is discharged from the site must not increase). The City or project developer will need to submit before/after hydraulic computations for both 10 and 100 year rainfall events verifying that all existing drainage patterns and systems affecting Mn/DOT right of way will be perpetuated. Please direct questions concerning these issues to Mary Lacho (651-634-2111) of Mn/DOT's Water Resources section.
- Any use of or work within Mn/DOT right of way requires a permit. An access permit is required. Please direct questions regarding permit applications to Keith VanWagner (651-582-1443) of Mn/DOT's Permits section.

Please address all future correspondence for development activity such as plats, site plans, environmental reviews, and comprehensive plan amendments to:

Paul Czech
Mn/DOT - Metro Division
Waters Edge
1500 West County Road B-2
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Mn/DOT document submittal guidelines require three (3) complete copies of plats and two (2) copies of other review documents including site plans. Failure to provide three (3) copies of a plat and/or two (2)

An equal opportunity employer

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY

5-16-02; 1:07PM; USD1-NPS

; 715 463 3288

2 / 3



State of Wisconsin | DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Scott McCallum, Governor
Darrell Bazzell, Secretary
William H. Smith, Regional Director

Northern Region Headquarters
810 W. Maple Street
Spooner, Wisconsin 54801
Telephone 715-635-2101
FAX 715-635-4105
TTY 715-635-4001

May 13, 2002

Thomas Bradley, Supt.
National Park Service
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
P.O. Box 708
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024-0708

MAY 16 2002

Dear Tom:

We have completed our review of the information provided on your proposed construction of a new Headquarters/Visitor Contact Facility. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with our initial comments as part of your early agency coordination effort.

We do not have any particular environmental concerns for the alternatives of constructing on your existing headquarters site or next to the Polk County Information Center. Neither of these sites has any known state endangered/threatened species or wetland areas. However, as part of your early site review, you should check with local zoning to see if the road into your existing headquarters location is a platted access to the flowage. If this is a dedicated access and you wish to abandon that road as part of the overall process to construct a new headquarters facility, you should be aware that our department has a role with local municipalities in the review of proposed access abandonments. In general, we like to see public access points remain in place.

We do have some concerns regarding the Indianhead Flowage Site alternative. These are as follows:

1. While there are no known state endangered/threatened species, there are two state special concern plant species (Silvery Scurf Pea and Assiniborne Sedge) documented as present in the area. Some further field review work may be necessary as part of your environmental analysis to determine the location and extent of any populations of these species. You should contact Jamie Schlangen in our Bureau of Endangered Resources at Madison for further consultation on what might be required. She can be reached at 608/264-6057.
2. It appears this site contains some small wetlands and has an intermittent stream running through it to the St. Croix River. We are also concerned about erosion control on this site during construction. These resource issues need to be addressed in your environmental analysis. A grading permit could be required from our Department depending on the location and extent of earthwork needed to develop this site. Further consultation would be needed to determine what, if any, additional review and approval may be necessary from our Department. You should contact our Water Management Specialist, Ed Slaminski, here in Spooner at 715/635-4097 regarding these issues.
3. From a land use perspective, we would prefer to see the new facility constructed on either the existing headquarters site or the location next to the Polk County Information Center rather than on the Indianhead Flowage Site. The Indianhead Flowage Site is relatively undeveloped and sits next to a local park. Further, building development on this site also could detract aesthetically from the

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*Quality Natural Resources Management
Through Excellent Customer Service*



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5-16-02; 1:07PM; USDI-NPS

715 483 3288

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viewshed of recreational users on the flowage. We encourage you to consider land use perspectives in the environmental analysis of alternative sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on your headquarters facility construction proposal at this early stage. We look forward to continued coordination once the Environmental Assessment is completed. If you or your staff have further general questions regarding your environmental analysis process, please contact me here in Spooner at 715/635-4226.

Sincerely,



Bill Clark

Environmental Review Supervisor

cc: Ed Slaminski - Spooner
Jamie Schlangen - ER/4

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
HEADQUARTERS/VISITOR CONTACT FACILITY**
